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D **SOCEROOS  
ON THE BRINK  
OF ASIA CUP  
GLORY**

# DATE WITH DESTINY

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WEEKLY

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## SOCER HOTLINES

### SFC AND BOJIC PART WAYS

Sydney FC and Pedj Bojic have agreed to a mutual termination of the 30 year old's contract to allow the defender to pursue other career options.

The full back joined the Sky Blues from the Central Coast Mariners in June 2013 and his two year deal was set to end at the conclusion of the current Hyundai A-League campaign.

Bojic played 20 Hyundai A-League games for the Sky Blues and three FFA Cup matches.



### FABULOUS FERREIRA JOINS MARINERS

Central Coast Mariners are pleased to confirm that a deal for Portuguese winger Fabio Ferreira has been finalised through to the completion of Hyundai A-League season 12.

Ferreira links with the yellow and navy from rival Hyundai A-League outfit Adelaide United on a two-and-a-half season contract, effective immediately.

A former Sporting Lisbon and Chelsea FC youth player, Ferreira has averaged a goal every five games and contributed strongly to Adelaide United's efforts since linking with the men from the city of churches in 2012.



### ROAR WELCOMES BACK DEVERE

Talented defender Luke Devere has returned home to play for Brisbane Roar. After a four-year stint in South Korea with K-League club Gyeongnam FC, the 25-year-old has signed with the Roar through to the end of the Hyundai A-League season. He will wear No.33. Devere played 65 times and scored three goals for the Roar from 2008 to 2011. He has nine appearances for Australian at under-20 level, played twice for the national under-23 side and has twice been a substitute for the Socceroos. During his Korean stint he played 86 times for Gyeongnam FC and scored six goals.

### REDS SIGN EX REAL MADRID PLAYER PALANCA

Adelaide United is delighted to announce the signing of Spanish forward Miguel Palanca for the remainder of the season. Palanca began his football career with his local club, Espanyol, before signing for European giants, Real Madrid, making three appearances in their first team, whilst regularly playing for their second team in the Spanish Segunda División. Palanca's debut for Real Madrid came in a 2-0 El Clásico loss against Barcelona at Camp Nou.

In the 2009/10 season, Palanca went on loan to Castellón where he featured 36 times and scored three goals, before joining current La Liga club, Elche. At Elche, Palanca made a total of 72 appearances, scoring five times whilst they were in Segunda División.

Palanca joins the Reds after spending the last 18-months playing for Numancia in Segunda División, earning himself 42 appearances and scoring five goals for the club.

\*\*\*\*\*

### JETS CONFIRM BIRIGHITTI LOAN TO AS VARESE

Newcastle Jets have reached an agreement with Italian Serie B team AS Varese for the loan of goalkeeper Mark Birighitti.

Birighitti will travel to Italy today to finalise the loan and will be with AS Varese until the end of June 2015.

Birighitti remains contracted to the Newcastle Jets for the Hyundai A-League 2015/16 season but the agreement includes an option for the Italian Club to purchase the player at the end of the initial loan period.

\*\*\*\*\*

### SYDNEY FC SIGN YOUNG GUN

Sydney FC has continued to strengthen its squad during the January transfer window with the signing of 24 year old Australian left sided midfielder Robert Stambolziev.

The youngster becomes Head Coach Graham Arnold's third signing of the month following deals to bring Senegalese internationals Mickael Tavares and Jacques Faty to the club.

Stambolziev has spent the last eight years of his career playing in Europe beginning in the youth team at English club Bristol City before moving to Greek giants Panathinaikos in 2009 and finishing up at Niki Volos in the Greek Super League.



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# WITH THE BREAK FOR THE ASIAN CUP OVER THERE IS NO TIME FOR HALF MEASURES

By Simon Maher

**N**either Melbourne City nor the Western Sydney Wanderers can say they have not been warned. City host the Wanderers this Sunday afternoon at AAMI Park and both teams can learn much from last week's fixtures. The Hyundai A-league has resumed and the message from last week's split round is that the mid-season hiatus for the Asian Cup has provided some teams with an opportunity to reorganise whilst others are showing signs that the break has created further challenges for already troubled seasons.

Mid-season breaks are regular fare in many leagues of the world. In Argentina the competition divides into the Apertura and Clausura. In Germany's Bundesliga, Italy's Serie A, Holland's Eredivisie and Belgium's Pro-League the seasons break over the Christmas –New Year period. In Australian football mid-season breaks are very much the exception and not the rule. As the Hyundai A League resumes this week-end for part two of the split round it is apparent that the hiatus for the 2015 AFC Asian Cup is shaping as a crucial fork in the season. Last weekend Adelaide United and Sydney FC showed just how important it is to hit the ground running. The Reds demolished the hapless Newcastle to signal very clearly that they are back on track. Sydney also grabbed the initiative in putting the Central Coast Mariners to the sword on their home patch to turn around a frustrating run of seven games without a win and four without a goal.

The Reds and the Sky Blues have shown that the A-League resumption has kicked off with a flourish and that anyone not primed risks being left behind in a cloud of dust.

In Perth, the Glory staged one of the more extraordinary comebacks of the season by hauling back a 1-3 deficit to claim a share of the spoils with two late goals against Melbourne Victory.

Both City and the Wanderers have particular reasons to seize the initiative this week-end. Melbourne City have held their nerve after a challenging start to the season and managed to climb into seventh spot within in sight of clawing their way back into the Top Six. They have two games up their sleeve and if they can turn them into 3 pointers will be closing the gap on



the  
6th placed  
Sydney FC.

While City can see the prize with their grasp, the Wanderers see a longer road, but one they must enter with belief if they are to regain their stature in the A-league. The Kings of Asian Club Football have endured a horror spell so far and have yet to taste the sweetness of a victory thus far in the domestic competition.

Sundays clash promises to be gripping viewing as it will provide a window into the fortunes of these teams in the second half of the season. Wanderers have made several significant changes moving on the enigmatic maverick Vitor Saba and bringing in defender Sam Gallaway, midfielder Kearyn Baccus and young Socceroo striker Kerim Bulut. They will be hoping to begin their revival by maintaining the imposing record they hold over City. The Western Wanderers have never been beaten by City but the home team will be looking to change that. They will look to classy Marquee Robert Koren to start where he finished the first half of the season, brimming with confidence and three goals. Look to Aaron Mooy as well to be sniffing for a chance to inflict pain on his old club.

# SCOREBOARD

## ROUND FIFTEEN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last 5 matches
1. Perth Glory	15	10	3	2	28	18	+10	33	DLWDW
2. Adelaide United	15	9	2	4	29	14	+15	29	WWLWL
3. Melbourne Victory	15	8	5	2	31	18	+13	29	DWLWL
4. Wellington Phoenix	14	9	1	4	28	14	+14	28	WWWWWD
5. Sydney FC	15	5	7	3	20	16	+4	22	WDDLL
6. Melbourne City	13	4	4	5	20	24	-4	16	LWDWW
7. Brisbane Roar	13	3	3	7	14	19	-5	12	LDDWL
8. Central Coast	15	2	6	7	13	26	-13	12	LWDDL
9. Newcastle Jets	15	1	5	9	12	35	-23	8	LDLLW
10. Western Sydney	12	0	4	8	7	18	-11	4	LDLLL

**Central Coast Mariners 1 (Major 66')**

Sydney FC 5 (Janko 15', 48', Naumoff 18', Ibini 44', Brosque 71')

**Adelaide United 7** (Djite 1', 53', Carrusca 23', 28', Boogard 35', Cirio 69', Isaias 92')**Newcastle Jets 0****Perth Glory 3** (Keogh 22', Griffiths 78', McLaren 88')**Melbourne Victory 3** (Khalfallah 18', Berisha 42', Barbarouses 57')

## MATCH STATS

### AGAINST ALL ODDS

#### A-League Title 2014/15

Melbourne Victory	4.00
Perth Glory	4.50
Adelaide United	4.50
Wellington Phoenix	6.50
Sydney FC	8.00
Melbourne City	9.50
Brisbane Roar	17.00
Central Coast Mariners	51.00
Wanderers	51.00
Newcastle Jets	101.00

## TOP GOAL SCORERS

N. Burns	Wellington	10
A. Keogh	Perth	9
B. Berisha	Mel Victory	8
Henrique Silva	Brisbane	7
M. Janko	Sydney	6
A. Thompson	Melb Victory	6
M. Carrusca	Adelaide Utd	5
Cirio	Adelaide Utd	5
B. Djité	Adelaide Utd	5
R. Krishna	Wellington	5
J. McLaren	Perth	4
M. McGlinchey	Wellington	4
F. Ben Khalfallah	Melb Victory	3
M. Duke	Central Coast	3
J. Griffiths	Newcastle	3

## THIS WEEK

Round 17	Fixture	Venue	Local	AEDT
Friday 6 February	Newcastle Jets v Brisbane Roar	Hunter Stadium	7:30 PM	7:30 PM
Saturday 7 February	Mariners v Adelaide United	TBC	5:00 PM	5:00 PM
Saturday 7 February	Melb Victory v Melbourne City	Etihad Stadium	7:45 PM	7:45 PM
Saturday 7 February	Perth Glory v Sydney FC	nib Stadium	6:45 PM	9:45 PM
Sunday 8 February	Wanderers v Wellington Phoenix	Pirtek Stadium	5:00 PM	5:00 PM

## NEXT WEEK

Round 18	Fixture	Venue	Local	AEDT
Friday 13 February	Mariners v Brisbane Roar	Central Coast Stadium	7:30 PM	7:30 PM
Saturday 14 February	Wellington Phoenix v Melb City	TBC	5:00 PM	3:00 PM
Saturday 14 February	Newcastle Jets v Wanderers	Hunter Stadium	5:00 PM	5:00 PM
Saturday 14 February	Sydney FC v Melbourne Victory	Allianz Stadium	7:45 PM	7:45 PM
Sunday 15 February	Adelaide United v Perth Glory	Coopers Stadium	4:30 PM	5:00 PM



## Melbourne City v Wanderers

Sun 1 Feb AAMI Park 5:00 PM



1. Andrew Redmayne
3. Robbie Wielaert
4. Connor Chapman
5. Erik Paartalu
6. Aaron Mooy
7. Iain Ramsay
8. Massimo Murdocca
9. David Villa
10. Robert Koren
11. Damien Duff
13. Jonatan Germano
14. James Brown
15. David Williams
17. Jason Hoffman
18. Paulo Rétre
19. Benjamin Garuccio
20. Tando Velaphi
21. Stefan Mauk
22. Nick Kalmár
23. Mate Dugandžić
24. Patrick Kisnorbo
25. Jacob Mellíng
26. Marc Marino



The Odds	Head to Head
Melb City 1.95	Played 6
Draw 3.40	City 0
Wanderers 3.60	Draw 1
	Wanderers 5

**Kiss of Death**  
Melb City 2-0 Wanderers

1. Ante Covic
2. Shannon Cole
3. Daniel Mullen
4. Nikolai Topor-Stanley(C)
5. Brendan Hamill
6. Antony Golec
7. Labinot Haliti
- ,8.Mateo Poljak
9. Tomi Juric
10. Vitor Saba
11. Brendon Santalab
- 12.Nikita Rukavytsya
13. Matthew Spiranovic
14. Kwabena Appiah
15. Yianni Perkitis
17. Romeo Castelen
18. Iacopo La Rocca
19. Mark Bridge
20. Dean Bouzanis
22. Seyi Adeleke
23. Jason Trifiro
31. Alusine Fofanah
32. Daniel Alessi
35. Keary Baccus
34. Golgot Mebrahtu

## City look to close the gap

Chris Hearn

Western Sydney Wanderers travel to face Melbourne City in search of its first win this season, desperate to close the gap on the A-League's top six.

City's inconsistencies have continued during the mid-season break, boasting an indifferent record in Dubai, losing 2-0 to Al Jazira FC, but managed a 1-1 draw against FC Dnipro. David Williams equalised late after Ukrainian international Roman Zozulya fired Dnipro ahead in the first half, a promising sign for John Van't Schip's men.

It is unclear whether Wanderers duo Tomi Juric and Matthew Spiranovic

will be available for selection following Socceroos duty. The only real possibility of the pair taking part in the contest is if Ange Postecoglou's men are eliminated against China on Thursday night.

Following a 1-0 derby day delight against Melbourne Victory, City have failed to consolidate a finals position. A promising draw against league leaders Perth Glory was followed by a sumptuous 5-2 mauling of Newcastle Jets, before the Central Coast Mariners brought the high-fliers back down to earth with a 2-0 defeat.

While consistency is the main issue for City, the same cannot be said for the Wanderers. Tony Popovic's

side have only kept two clean sheets thus far in season 10, both coming against fellow strugglers, the Mariners, while the fluidity in forward areas leaves a lot to be desired. A porous defence mixed with an attack that has breached the opposition's net seven times in 12 fixtures points to real danger signs for last season's runners up.

It is hard to see the Wanderers finding the firepower to overcome City, especially with Robi Koren's emergence after injury, and seeing as there is a high probability that Popovic may have to field a weakened defence and improvised attack if Juric is not available.

Melbourne City FC can announce it has signed Singaporean International defender Safuan Baharudin for the remainder of the Hyundai A-League 2014/15 season. Baharudin, 23, has 43 international caps with Singapore's National Team and recently attended Melbourne City FC's training camp in Abu Dhabi from January 10 until January 19 as part of a development opportunity arranged with the Singaporean Football Association.

- MCFC have lost just one of their last five A-League games (W3 D1).

- Western Sydney Wanderers are without a win so far this season (D4 L8).

- City have scored at least once in every home game this season, and exactly one in each of their last four.



## Brisbane v Wellington Phoenix

Sun 1 Feb Suncorp 2:00 PM



1. Michael Theo (Gk)
2. Matt Smith (C)
3. Shane Stefanutto
4. Adam Sarota
5. Corey Brown
6. George Lambadaridis
7. Mensur Kurtishi
8. Steven Lustica
10. Henrique
11. Liam Miller
12. Carlos Solorzano
13. Jade North
14. Daniel Bowles
15. James Donachie
16. Devante Clut
17. Matt McKay
18. Luke Brattan
19. Jack Hingert
20. Kofi Danning
21. Jamie Young (Gk)
22. Thomas Broich
23. Dimitri Petratos
27. Ben Littfin
28. Brandon Borrello
29. Patrick Theodore



1. Glen Moss
2. Manny Muscat
3. Reece Caira
4. Roly Bonevacia
5. Michael Boxall
6. Josh Brindell-South
7. Kenny Cunningham
8. Alejandro Gorrin
9. Nathan Burns
10. Michael McGlinchey
11. Jeremy Brockie
12. Tyler Boyd
13. Albert Riera
14. Alex Rufer
15. Jason Hicks
16. Louis Fenton
17. Vince Lia
18. Ben Sigmund (vice-captain)
19. Tom Doyle
20. Lewis Italiano
21. Roy Krishna
22. Andrew Durante (captain)
23. Matthew Ridenton

## Roar Aim to Rise Past Phoenix

Jarrod Ellis

A -League action returns to Brisbane on February 2nd when the Roar play host to the highflying Wellington Phoenix.

The three week break will have come as a welcome interlude for Brisbane after a disappointing first half of the season that culminated with a 3-0 defeat to Wellington at Westpac Stadium on January 4th.

That day marked the first match for Brisbane post Matt Smith and the arrival of the Phoenix in Brisbane will again present a different looking Roar. Off-season signing Mensur Kurtishi has departed the club, some promising performances wasn't enough to cover the lack of goal return from the man whom many expected to replace Besart Berisha.

Former Western Sydney Wanderers' right-back Jerome Polenz has signed for the club and is expected to make

his debut against Wellington. The German should add some much needed experience and determination to the defence but his style of play bears little resemblance to that of the departed Ivan Franjic.

Along with the arrival of Polenz Brisbane may also be welcoming back a trio of injured stars.

Michael Theo, absent since preseason with a broken wrist has returned to training along with Jack Hingert and Thomas Broich. All three are reportedly under consideration to take to the pitch in what would be a much needed boost for Brisbane.

Wellington will have their own boost with the return of Nathan Burns to the side. The league leading scorer missed the last encounter with Brisbane along with Roy Krishna, the two having pushed the Phoenix to second spot on the ladder with their goals. Ernie Merrick's side have been playing

with an air of confidence in their last few outings, winning their last four in a row and establishing the top attack and defence records in the lead.

With results like that talk of Wellington as a legitimate title threat has emerged. If that is truly the case then this match against Brisbane could prove crucial. Away travels have long been the Phoenix's weak point and it will be telling how the team performs in what is effectively a return leg after the 3-0 win in Round 14.

Brisbane have long owned this fixture. In twenty-two meetings the Phoenix have only managed three wins with not a single one notched up outside of New Zealand.

Should Wellington leave Brisbane with their first ever-three points in the city then Ernie Merrick's side will have taken another step towards proving themselves a genuine threat.

- BRFC are yet to win at home this season (D2 L3), scoring just three goals at Suncorp Stadium.

- The Nix have never won or kept a clean sheet in 11 A-League visits to Brisbane (D2 L9).



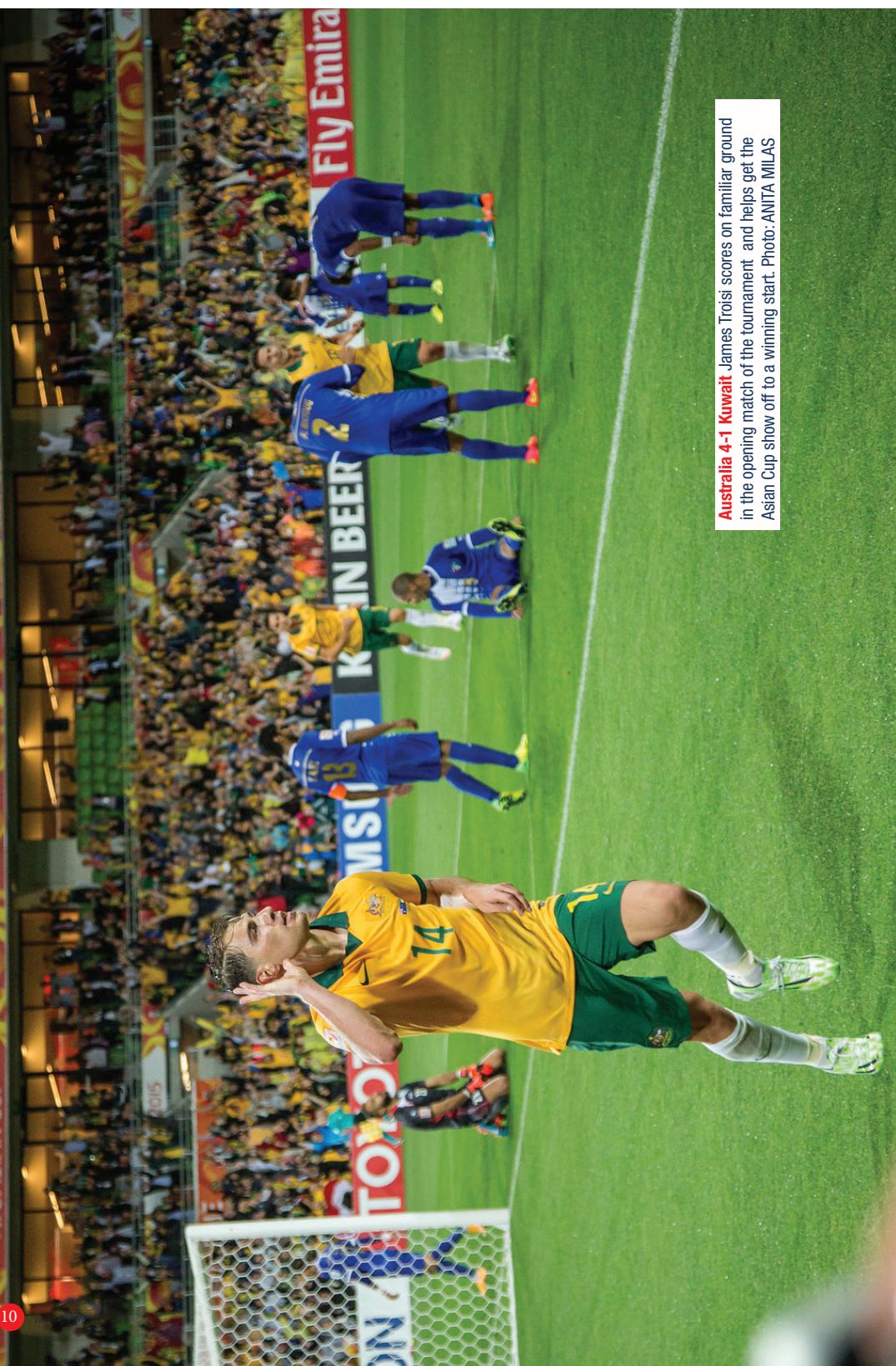
Pablo Bateson's  
National Teams'  
Scene



# Asia Cup Special

Join Pablo Bateson on a football journey as he reviews the Asia Cup.





**Australia 4-1 Kuwait** James Troisi scores on familiar ground in the opening match of the tournament and helps get the Asian Cup show off to a winning start. Photo: ANITA MILAS

## Asia Cup | Australia 2015

Report: PABLO BATESON

**Australia 4-0 Oman** Tomi Juric puts the icing on the cake to slide in and finish off a great flowing move, and all but secure a spot in the quarter finals. Photo: GEORGE MARIN



## Aussies and Korea through

Supporters and observers of the Socceroos were beginning to believe that the longer term strategy of coach Ange Postecoglou was paying dividends, and then came another reality check at the hand of Korea Republic in the heat and humidity of Brisbane.

Australia had been most impressive in their comprehensive demolitions of Kuwait and Oman over the previous week and yet subsequently faltered against a more resilient opponent. Even allowing for these conditions as well as a pitch that was grossly sub-standard, a failure to convert several clear cut chances created cost them a chance to finish in top spot and a potentially much kinder run towards the goal of reaching the final.

In comparison, the other teams Oman and Kuwait seemed well out of their depth even if the former was unfortunate to not get at least a draw from their opening game against the

"Taeguk Warriors". Korea Republic appeared to be gradually working into the tournament, although they were to next face a tough adversary in traditional rivals Uzbekistan. The latter was denied a qualification spot for the Brasil 2014 World Cup to miss out only on slightly inferior goal difference behind Korea at the final group stage in 2013.

On the positive side for the Socceroos, staying in Brisbane for the quarter final meant continuity at their base camp and a slight advantage compared with China in terms of being better acclimatised to the deal with the conditions. The suspension of key central defender Matthew Spiranovic for a second yellow card was a blow. However with no major injury concerns and eight different goal scorers across the first two games there was every reason to be optimistic for a bounce back result to be achieved in their next match.

## The Good, The Bad & The Ugly

By Simon Maher

Korea Republic showed in their 1-0 win over the Socceroo's that they have earned the tag of "Taeguk Warriors" the hard way. Despite losing Bolton Wanderers star Lee Chung-Yong to a tournament ending injury, and having to start with Leverkusen star Son Heung-Min due on the bench due to illness the Warriors managed to upend the Socceroo's progress and top Group A. They overcame more injuries, a moth plague, the Suncorp pitch, and a Socceroo battering to finish with 3 wins and ominously no goals against.

The Socceroo's rediscovered a big chunk of their mojo recording thumping wins over Kuwait and Oman and reversing a sequence of deflating results. Along the way they found seven goal scorers whose name did not end with Cahill. However the loss to Korea Republic showed they still need to find something extra to progress beyond the quarters. Will they find it in time to deal with the sleeping giant? (see below) Oman and Kuwait struggled to keep up with the pace and power of the group stages and disappointingly never looked contenders.

## Group A

**AUSTRALIA 4** (Cahill 33', Luongo 44', Jedinak (pen) 62', Troisi 92')  
def **KUWAIT 1** (Fadhel 8') in Melbourne.

**KOREA REP 1** (Cho Young-Cheol 45+)  
def **OMAN 0** in Canberra.

**KOREA REPUBLIC 1** (Nam Tae-hee 36')  
def **KUWAIT 0** in Canberra.

**AUSTRALIA 4** (McKay 27', Kruse 30', Milligan 45+3, Juric 70')  
def **OMAN 0** in Sydney.

**KOREA REP 1** (Lee Jeong-hyop 32')  
def **AUSTRALIA 0** in Brisbane.  
Crowd 48,513

**OMAN 1** (Abdulaziz Al Muqbali 69')  
def **KUWAIT 0** in Newcastle. Crowd 7,499

## FINAL STANDINGS

	PW	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
<b>1</b> Korea Rep	3	3	0	3	0	+3	9
<b>2</b> Australia	3	2	0	18	2	+6	6
<b>3</b> Oman	3	1	0	2	1	-5	4
<b>4</b> Kuwait	3	0	0	3	1	-6	0



**CHINA 2-1 DPR KOREA** Chinese striker Ke scores one of his two goals in the tie played in Canberra. Phot: NICK GUOTH



# Asia Cup I Australia 2015

Report: PABLO BATESON



**UZBEKS THROUGH** Outsiders Uzbekistan surprise the odds and book their spot in to the next round.

Photo: ANITA MILAS

## China reign supreme

China surprised most including their own fans by topping the group undefeated, including convincing wins over Saudi Arabia and then Uzbekistan. However, the price to pay for such dominance would be to meet the host nation in the quarter-final. "Zhong Guo Dui" (Team China) has a well balanced team on the rise and huge support from the large Chinese-Australian, expat population and travelling fans as demonstrated in particular in Canberra against Korea DPR.

The latter ("Chollima") never really looked like seriously challenging any of their group opponents, and appeared to be a shadow the side that qualified for the 2010 World Cup.

Going into the last game, it was left for the "White Wolves" of Central Asia and "Al Sogour Al Akhdar" (The Green Falcons) to battle for second spot. The Uzbeks ran out worthy winners 3-1 and were quietly confident of their abilities to upset the Koreans at the Melbourne Rectangular Stadium.

## The Good, The Bad & The Ugly

By Simon Maher

China showed definite signs that the "sleeping giant" of Asian football may be stirring completing the group stage with 3 wins.

Uzbekistan showed again that they are one of the most curious outfits in Asian football. Playing with the power and pace that reflects their Soviet Republic links, they also boasted gifted play maker Server Djeparov. They played as if they always had an extra gear to slip into but could not always find it. They totally dominated drab North Korea but only had a goal to show, before losing to China. They then dropped stars Djeparov and Igor Sergeev before overpowering Saudi Arabia in their last game to progress to the knock out stage.

North Korea looked completely bereft of ideas, inspiration and know how. Hopefully their experience at the Cup will raise awareness of the need to bring their football in to the 21st century.

## Group B

**UZBEKISTAN 1** (Sergeev 62')  
def **DPR KOREA 0** in Sydney.

**CHINA 1** (Yu Hai 81')  
def **SAUDI ARABIA 0** in Brisbane.

**SAUDI ARABIA 4** (Naif Hazazi 37', Mohammed Al Sahlawi 52', 54', Nawaf Al Abid 77')  
def **DPR Korea 1** (Ryang Yong-gi 11') in Melbourne.

**CHINA 2** (Wu Xi 55', Sun Ke 68')  
def **UZBEKISTAN 1** (Odil Ahmedov 23') in Brisbane.

**UZBEKISTAN 3** (Rashidov 2', 79', Shodiev 71')  
def **SAUDI ARABIA 1** (Al Sahlawi 60') in Melbourne. Crowd 10,871

**CHINA PR 2** (Ke 1', 42')  
def **DPR KOREA 1** (Lin 56') in Canberra. Crowd 18,499

### FINAL STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
<b>1 China PR</b>	3	3	0	5	2	+3	9	
<b>2 Uzbekistan</b>	3	2	0	1	5	+2	6	
<b>3 Saudi Arabia</b>	3	1	0	2	5	+0	3	
<b>4 Korea DPR</b>	3	0	0	3	2	-7	-5	0



**IRAN 1-0 QATAR** Karim Boudiaf (Qatar) tussles with Shojaei for the ball.  
Photo: GEORGE MARIN



# Asia Cup I Australia 2015

Report: PABLO BATESON



**IRAN 2-0 BAHRAIN** Ehsan Hajsafi can't contain his delight after opening the scoring. Photo: ANITA MILAS

## Iran tops, UAE impress

Securing that crucial top spot went literally 'right down to the wire' between west Asian rivals Iran and UAE at the Brisbane Stadium. A dramatic stoppage time added winner sunk "Al Sukoor" (The Eagles) after they had dominated possession over the game. In all three games, the UAE had provided an expansive style of football to entertain their fans and neutrals alike. An opening game 4-1 win over Gulf neighbours Qatar demonstrated just how far their football development has come in recent years. They would approach a quarter-final encounter against Japan without fear and belief of being able to deliver an upset.

For Qatar, they had such high hopes for the tournament especially on the back of winning last year's AFC U-19 Championship held in Myanmar. "Al Amar" (The Reds) never recovered from their opening defeat, and rounded off the campaign with a frustrating loss to Bahrain who did just enough to win as their opponents missed numerous clear cut scoring chances.

Iran's reward would be to face arch rivals Iraq in the quarter final at Canberra, and the opportunity to secure a semi-final place versus either the Korea Republic or Uzbekistan.

## Group C

**UAE 4** (Ahmed Khalil 37', 52', Ali Mabkhout 57', 89')  
def **QATAR 1** (Khalfan Ibrahim 22') in Canberra.

**IRAN 2** (Ehsan Hajsafi 45+2', Masoud Shojaei 71')  
def **BAHRAIN 0** in Melbourne.

**UAE 2** (Ali Mabkhout 1', Mohamed Hussain OG 73')  
def **BAHRAIN 1** (Jaycee John 26') in Canberra. Crowd 7,925

**IRAN 1** (Sardar Azmoun 52') def **QATAR 0** in Sydney. Crowd 22,672

**IRAN 1** (Ghoochannejhad 90 + 1')  
def **UAE 0** in Brisbane. Crowd 11,394

**BAHRAIN 2** (Sayed Shubbar 35', Jaffar 82')  
def **QATAR 1** (Hasan Al Haydos 68') in Sydney.

## FINAL STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
<b>1 Iran</b>	3	3	0	0	4	0	+4	9
<b>2 UAE</b>	3	2	0	1	6	3	+3	6
<b>3 Bahrain</b>	3	1	0	2	3	5	-2	3
<b>4 Qatar</b>	3	0	0	3	2	7	-5	0

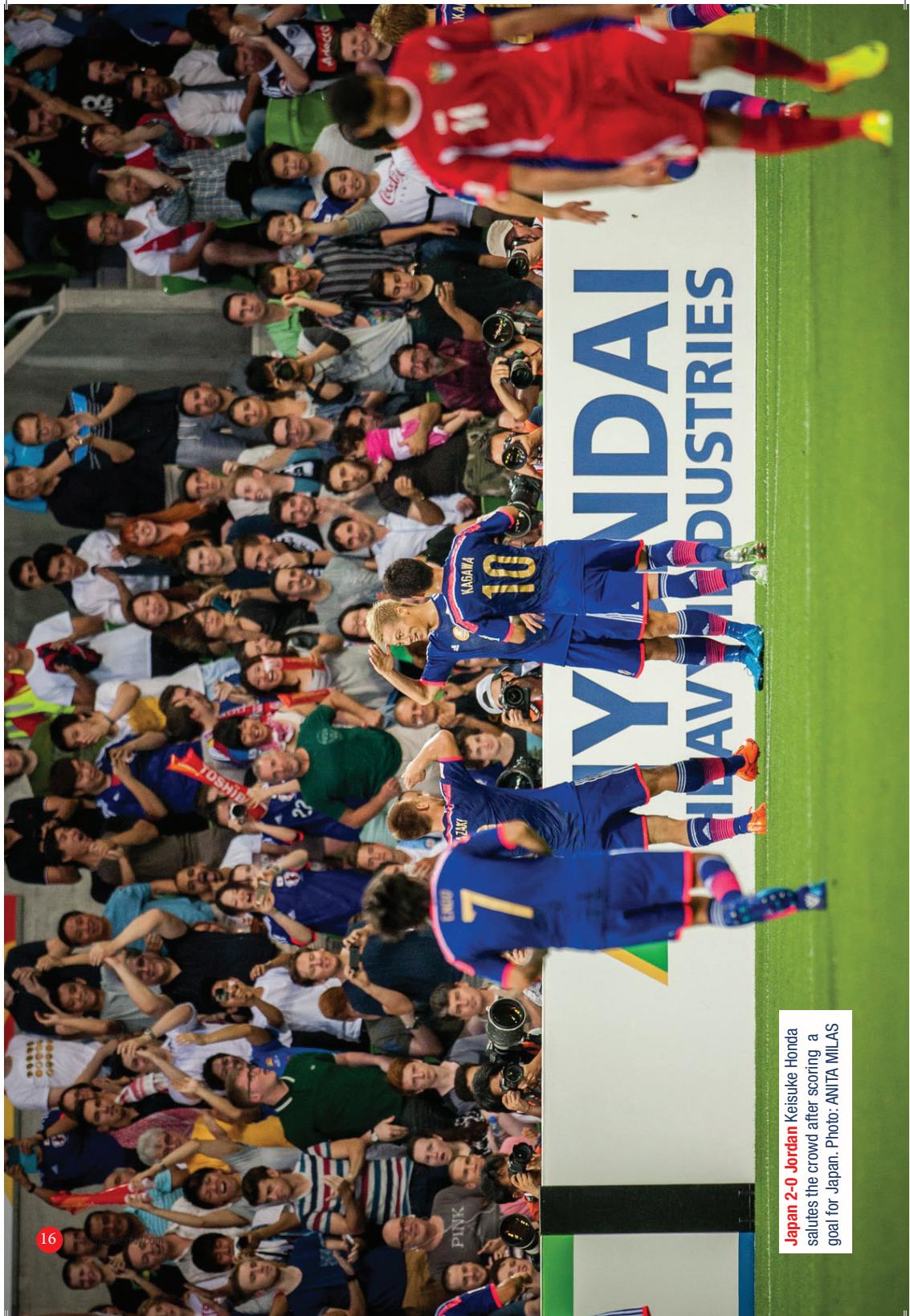


## The Good, The Bad & The Ugly

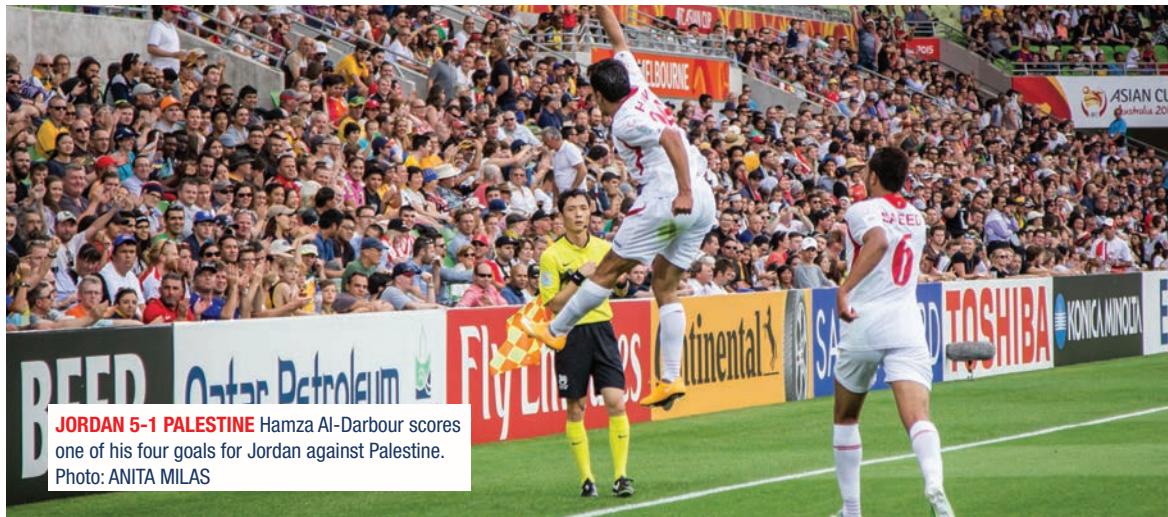
By Simon Maher

Iran are the rock stars of the Asian Cup. Anyone lucky enough to watch their games will never forget the experience. 23,000 fans at Stadium Australia sounded like 123,000! Iran played with pace and verve showcasing the skills of Ashkan Dejagh, Masoud Shojaei and starlet striker Sardar Azmoun whose crucial goal against Qatar must surely be the goal of the tournament so far. Omar Abdulrahman is simply unique. Whilst this left footed gimlet is on the ball it seems that the UAE may be capable of delivering a big surprise somewhere. Could it possibly be a quarter final?

Bahrain and Qatar played their role in some entertaining group matches against Iran but always looked like supporting actors.



**Japan 2-0 Jordan** Keisuke Honda salutes the crowd after scoring a goal for Japan. Photo: ANITA MILAS



**JORDAN 5-1 PALESTINE** Hamza Al-Darbour scores one of his four goals for Jordan against Palestine.  
Photo: ANITA MILAS

## Blue Samurai in control

As expected the “Samurai Blue” dominated the group from the onset and confirmed their pre-tournament status as favourites to lift the trophy. The draw had been kind and they appeared to play with much in reserve for long periods of all three games. After thumping a hapless Palestinian side in Newcastle, they outplayed Iraq in Brisbane. The latter had previously overcome Arab neighbours Jordan 1-0 to already all but secure second spot for progression. “Al Nashama” (The Brave) needed to beat Japan in the final group game to achieve a top two finishing spot, and fell well short as they lost 0-2 to the reigning

champions at the Melbourne Rectangular Stadium in front of full house.

Despite the passionate support of their proud fans living in the host nation, “Al Muntakhab” (the National Team) bowed out of the tournament having been soundly defeated in all three matches. In their final match at Canberra, Palestine showed much great resilience in the first half against Iraq and yet eventually succumbed 0-2. “Osod Al Rafideen” (the Lions of the Two Rivers) confirmed their second spot and will be advantaged by staying in the national capital for the quarter final.

## Group D

**JAPAN 4** (Yasuhiro Endo 8', Shinji Okazaki 25', Keisuke Honda pen 42', Maya Yoshida 49')  
def **PALESTINE 0** in Newcastle.

**IRAQ 1** (Yaser Kasim 78')  
def **JORDAN 0** in Brisbane.

**JORDAN 5** (Yousef Ahmad 33', Hamza Al Dardour 35', 45+2', 75', 80')  
def **PALESTINE 1** (Jaka Hbaisha 85') in Melbourne. Crowd 10,808.

**JAPAN 1** (Keisuke Honda pen 23')  
def **IRAQ 0** in Brisbane. Crowd 22,941.

**JAPAN 2** (Honda 24', Kagawa 82')  
def **JORDAN 0** in Melbourne. Crowd 25,016

**IRAQ 2** (Mahmood 48', Yasin 88')  
def **PALESTINE 0** in Canberra.  
Crowd 10,235

### FINAL STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Japan	3	3	0	0	7	0	+7	9
2 Iraq	3	2	0	1	3	1	+2	6
3 Jordan	3	1	0	2	5	4	+1	3
4 Palestine	3	0	0	3	1	11	-10	0



## The Good, The Bad & The Ugly

By Simon Maher

On group form Japan remain the untouchables of Asian football. They cruised through to the quarters and looked to be toying with opponents like a cat with a mouse. Star men Keisuke Honda and Shinji Kagawa looked capable of scoring at any moment. Can any one stop the Blue Samurai carrying off a 5th Asian Cup?

Iraq enjoyed the luxury of cruising into the qualifying rounds courtesy of soft points against two of the tournaments light weights Jordan and Palestine. In doing so they didn't give much away, but just how much else do they have to give?

## The Good, The Bad & The Ugly

By Simon Maher

**UAE 1-1 Japan** UAE players celebrate after winning the penalty shootout and eliminating the red-hot favourites out of the cup.  
Photo: ALI ERHAN

### South Korea V Uzbekistan

The “Taguk Warriors” again held out their opponents – the “White Wolves” in an end to end game with that man Son Heung Min scoring both goals. Uzbekistan showed again that they are one of the most curious outfits in Asian football. Playing with the power and pace that reflects their Soviet Republic links, they also boasted gifted play maker Servet Djeparov. Stuttering group performances saw stars Djeparov and Igor Sergeev moved on before they rediscovered their collective purpose in the quarter final. What might have been?

### Australia V China

The Socceroos overcame assorted pre- match tensions to overcome a Chinese team growing in confidence as the competition progressed. To include Tim Cahill’s two wonder strikes in the “good section” is clearly folly, how about ‘priceless’ or ‘historic’? Despite the loss China showed definite signs that the “sleeping giant” of Asian football may finally be stirring, attracting unprecedented levels of popular support at home and record TV ratings and media interest.

### Iraq V Iran

For many the game of the tournament. A match seething with historical tensions between two Middle Eastern powers in the scorching Summer heat of a Canberra afternoon. Last minute goals, pulsating atmosphere, a send-off, extra time, penalties what didn’t this game have?

As tempers simmered it is an enormous credit to all concerned, players, officials as well as sell-out crowd that despite the see-sawing emotions equanimity prevailed at the final whistle. It is probably more “sad” than “bad” but was it unfortunate to see Iran depart at the quarter final stage. They were the rock stars of the Asian Cup. Anyone lucky enough to watch their games will never forget the experience. 23,000 fans at Stadium Australia sounded like 123,000! Iran played with speed and purpose showcasing the skills of Ashkan Dejagah, Massoud Shojaei and starlet striker Sardar Azmoun whose crucial goal against Qatar must surely be one of the goals of the tournament.

### Japan V UAE

The UAE pulled off one of the biggest shocks in the history of the Asian Cup never mind the 2015 edition. Given no chance facing regional superpower and reigning Champs Japan the UAE grabbed an early goal courtesy of Ali Mabkhout and held the lead until the 86th minute when the Blue Samurai finally found a finish through to cap their weight of possession.

Omar Abdulrahman showed again that he possesses talents that are simply unique. The Blue Samurai cruised through the group stages dominating possession and bossing games without ever being troubled. With Star men like Keisuke Honda and Shinji Kagawa it was difficult to imagine Japan not carrying off their 5th Asian Title. The Omar Abdulrahman inspired UAE had other ideas and now Japanese football is facing serious soul searching. For all of their technical gifts and thumping possession stats there seemed to be a curious absence of purpose or drive in the quarter final. Was it complacency or something deeper? With the future of coach Javier Aguirre clouded by match fixing controversies, Japanese football has swung from a peak of expectation to deep questioning.



## Asia Cup I Australia 2015

Report: PABLO BATESON Photos: ANITA MILAS



**SOUTH KOREA 2-0 UZBEKISTAN** Kim Jin-su is tripped by Timur Kapadze.  
Photo: ANITA MILAS

## Cup hits business end

### Korea marches on

At a packed-out Melbourne Rectangular Stadium, Korea Republic dominated possession and yet were taken to extra time by the "White Wolves" of Central Asia. Following a highly entertaining yet goalless 90 minutes of normal time, it took a brace of goals from Son Heung-min to help propel the "Taeguk Warriors" into the semi-finals.

Bayer Leverkusen star forward Son netted with a minute of the first half of extra-time to go when his stooping close range header crept across the line to break the deadlock. Then in the 119th minute, as the Uzbeks desperately pushed for an equaliser, Son fired high into the roof of the net for 2-0.

### Super Tim magic

At the Brisbane Stadium one of the world's best strikers "Super Tim" Cahill produced the best goal of the tournament so far, and then followed up with the best headed goal of the 2015 Asian Cup. Australia bounced back after a shock defeat in the last group game against a Chinese side full of confidence and optimism.

In front of over 46,000 fans, Australia dominated possession in the first half with several clear cut chances created and yet not converted. Only four minutes after the break, came the pure football magic. Ivan Franjic headed into space on the near post for Cahill six metres out to balance

and with back turned to goal execute an acrobatic bicycle kick to send the ball past the keeper into the net at the far post. The stadium erupted!

On 65 minutes the game was all but buried when a fine cross from Jason Davidson on left found Cahill close to the penalty spot. He directed a precise header into the right hand corner of the net for 2-0. Mat Ryan made some outstanding saves late in the game and the Socceroos were through to the semi-final.

### Epic encounter in the national capital

Our nation's capital hosted the most dramatic game of the tournament so far when bitter rivals Iran and Iraq enthralled a capacity crowd at the Canberra Stadium. The encounter had just about every different element possible as the game ebbed and flowed with the score line see-sawing over normal and extra time.

Sardar Azmoun put Iran in front in the 24th minute, and his side soon went a player down when Mehrdad Pooladi was dismissed controversially by referee Ben Williams for a second yellow card. Ahmed Yasin's 56th minute equaliser then took the game to extra-time. Subsequently Iraq twice went in front through Younus Mahmood and later Dhurgham Ismail. However, each time the scores were brought level firstly by Morteza Pouraliganji and then most dramatically Reza

## Match Details

### QUARTER-FINAL 1

**KOREA REP 2** (Son Heung-min 104', 119') def **UZBEKISTAN 0** in Melbourne. Crowd 23,381

### QUARTER-FINAL 2

**AUSTRALIA 2** (Tim Cahill 48', 65') def **CHINA 0** in Brisbane. Crowd 46,067

### QUARTER-FINAL 3

**Iraq 3** (Yasin 56', Mahmood 93', Ismail 116') Iran 3 (Azmoun 24', Pouraliganji 103', Goochannejhad 119'). **Iraq won 7-6 on penalties.** In Canberra. Crowd 18,921.

### QUARTER-FINAL 4

**UAE 1** (Mabkhout 7') **Japan 1** (Shibasaki 81'). **UAE won 5-4 on penalties.** In Sydney. Crowd 19,094

Goochannej less than two minutes from the end.

In the sudden death shoot-out phase with scores level, Iran substitute Vahid Amiri put his penalty onto the left-hand upright. Salam Shakir then held his composure to claim victory 7-6 on penalties for Iraq and semi-final berth.



**AUSTRALIA 2-0 UAE** Trent Sainsbury is mobbed by team-mates after opening the scoring for the Socceroos.  
Photo: BEN NEVILLE

## Asia Cup I Australia 2015

Report: PABLO BATESON



**AUSTRALIA 2-0 UAE** Jason Davidson gives chase to Ali Ahmed Mabkhout.  
Photo: BEN NEVILLE

## Match Details

### SEMI-FINAL 1:

KOREA REP 2 (Lee Jeong-hyeop 20', Kim Young-gwon 50') def IRAQ 0 in Sydney. Crowd 36,053.

### SEMI-FINAL 2:

AUSTRALIA 2 (Trent Sainsbury 3', Jason Davidson 14') def UAE 0 in Newcastle. Crowd 21,079.

Australia now play in the final in Sydney on Saturday against Korea Republic.

UAE play in the 3rd/4th play-off on Friday in Newcastle against Iraq.

## Korea & 'Roos go full circle

### Taeguk Warriors cruise into final

On a damp evening at Stadium Australia in Sydney, Korea Republic dominated the opening half and did enough in the second to overcome Iraq 2-0. In front of over 36,000 they booked themselves a spot in the final for the first time since 1988.

Korea opened strongly and confident like the favoured team, and quickly took the initiative. It was apparent from soon after the kick off that Iraq looked as if they had been drained emotionally and physically from the previous match.

In the 20th minute later Korea took the lead when a curling and dipping free kick on the right side by defender Kim Jin Su was headed in by Lee Jeonghyeop on the far post. Only four minutes into the second half and just on the edge of the penalty area, Lee chested down neatly into the path of Kim Jin Hyeon who fired in a low shot into the corner of the net for 2-0 and the game seemed to be almost beyond the reach of Iraq.

In response, Iraq somehow lifted themselves to try and make it a real contest. They started to dominate possession for the first time although rarely testing the Korean goalkeeper. The game then drifted away from Iraq and not surprisingly their challenge faltered, with few further opportunities created as Korea was content to protect its lead. Progression to the final had been secured in methodical fashion and the slight advantage of an extra day's recovery compared with their rivals.

### Socceroos book date with destiny

Australia got the result they wanted on a wet evening in front of sell-out crowd at Newcastle Stadium to reach their second consecutive Asian Cup final. Like Korea Republic the day before, they took the initiative early on, secured a two goal buffer and then backed this up with solid defence to stifle the opposition.

The Socceroos started in devastating fashion. Inside three minutes, a corner from Massimo Luongo found the unmarked Trent Sainsbury who headed home into the

corner for 1-0.

UAE countered after nine minutes with a sweeping move down the right side culminating in a strike by Ahmed Khalil hitting the outside of the near post and out.

On 14 minutes, a cut back cross from Ivan Franjic led to two attempts on goal being blocked only for Luongo at full stretch to touch the ball neatly on for left back Jason Davidson who shot low from 10 metres inside the near post to make it 2-0.

UAE's star no 10 playmaker "Omar" Abdulrahman looked sharper and far more energetic than in their quarter final, however often looked on a different or higher wave-length of thinking than most team-mates.

After half time the UAE retained a lot more possession and yet this did not translate to creation of many clear cut chances on goal. Full time and the crowd rose up to salute their victorious Socceroos, with the full realisation that a date with destiny was only four days away in Sydney.



## The Good, The Bad & The Ugly

By Simon Maher

**South Korea V Iraq** It was little surprise to see the South Koreans continue their drive through the finals by consummately accounting for an Iraqi team that played all its cards in an exhausting heavy weight battle with fierce rivals Iran on a baking Canberra afternoon three days earlier. Iraq tried to summon the energy to match the Warriors but could

not keep up with Nam Tae Hee, Ki Sung Yueng or Lee Jung -hyup who showed in this game that they are heading into the final lap with throttles open.

**Australia V UAE** On a damp night in Newcastle the Socceroo's threw the big punches early against a UAE team who also arrived primed to throw leather. Following their momentous quarter

final upset over Japan the UAE started the game with playmaker Omar Abdurrahman sitting high behind three attackers. The home team connected first with debut goals from Trent Sainsbury and Jason Davidson in the first 14 minutes to effectively put the result to bed early.

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Report: SIMON MAHER



## Match Details

Asia Cup Final  
Korea Republic

v

Australia

Sat, Jan 31

KO 8:00PM

Stadium Australia

Edwin Flack Avenue,  
Sydney Olympic Park

## And then there were two...

**A**s sold out Stadium Australia will host the sixteenth final of the Asian Cup, the world's second oldest continental Cup competition. Few can argue that the 2015 Asian Cup has not been a monumental success. Record attendances, sold out stadiums and unprecedented viewing figures from around the globe reflect the interest and passion that this competition has inspired. The increasing quality of football and consistency across the groups suggests that many footballing lessons have been learned in Australia and will influence the future growth of Asian football.

How fitting that arguably the two best teams of the Tournament will contest this final. Records show that this game features the team with the best scoring record versus the team with the best defensive record. The Socceroos have racked up 12 goals thus far while quite incredibly the South Koreans are yet to concede a goal. While the Koreans boast a truly imposing defensive record they also carry an attack that is lightning fast on the counter and like the Socceroos have been willing to chance their arm and play attacking football. This final match-up possesses all the portents of a footballing epic.

South Korea have steered through their 2015 Asian Cup campaign with the coolness of a champion grand prix driver, accelerating when necessary to avoid trouble but saving that extra gear for the final laps. They stand on the cusp of claiming their second Asian Cup trophy but first in fifty nine years, having claimed the inaugural AFC Asian Cup in Hong Kong 1956. Along the way they have showed the true spirit bestowed in their team nick name of "Taeguk Warriors". Despite losing Bolton Wanderers star Lee Chung-Yong to a tournament ending injury, and Bayer Leverkusen star Son Heung-Min being incapacitated by illness, the Warriors overcame injuries, a moth plague, the Suncorp pitch, and upended the Socceroos to top Group A.

It was little surprise to see them continue their drive through the final defeating Uzbekistan in the Quarters before consummately accounting for an Iraqi team that looked like it had played all its cards in a fierce battle with rivals Iran in Canberra three days

earlier.

The Socceroos have rediscovered their mojo in reaching the Final of the Asian Cup for the second successive tournament, recording thumping wins over Kuwait and Oman in the group stage and reversing a sequence of deflating results. Defeat at the hands of South Korea in Brisbane raised pulse rates as well as doubts as the home team headed back to Suncorp for the Quarter Final to take on a Chinese team that had topped their group with three wins and was visibly growing in confidence.

Tim Cahill's goals administered the elixir to soothe nerves and ensure their advance to the Semi Final where they were too strong for the UAE. Cahill's two strikes will live on in Socceroo folklore as two of the most important goals in the history of the green and gold showcasing again his almost Messianic ability to conjure the unimaginable and then bring it to life.

As vital as Cahill's contribution has been the Socceroo's progress has not been a one man show. Along the way they found nine goal scorers whose name did not start with Timmy, and witnessed Trent Sainsbury and Massimo Luongo grow into their Socceroo careers with confidence. Australian Coach Ange Postecoglou's team has played with verve and daring during the Tournament and fully deserve to be contesting the Final with another outfit that prides itself on playing with speed and enterprise.

The Socceroos will be straining to sustain enough pressure to finally breach the Taeguk Warriors hitherto impregnable defence. Both teams play with a "who blinks first" approach, and by this stage of the Tournament the stakes are so high one slip or one moment of magic may prove the difference. Who will be capable of delivering on the big night? Could Cahill possibly find one more spark of magic, or could it be the time for one of his understudies, Leckie, Kruse or Burns to seize centre stage?

South Korea have Son Heung Min growing more threatening with every match and if he fires he may not only be carrying the Asian Cup by the end of the night but also the Player of the Tournament Medal.

It promises to be an enthralling night.

AFC ASIAN CUP

Photo: BEN NEVILLE

# SOCCE



**GOAL!**  
WEEKLY

# ASIAN CUP

The Socceroos line up prior their semi final clash with UAE in Newcastle. A crowd of 21,079 spurred the team on. Standing from left are Jason Davidson, Matthew Leckie, Robbie Kruse, Matthew Spiranovic, Mark Milligan and

# ROOS



## FINALISTS 2015

ed their local heroes to a 2-0 win and clinch a berth in Saturday's final against Korea Republic .  
Milligan, Massimo Luongo, Ivan Franjic, Trent Sainsbury, Tim Cahill, Mathew Ryan, Mile Jedinak (c).

# What do you think of the Asian Cup show so far?



**A**s we reach the sharp end of the Asian Cup some things are already clear, others remain to be settled. The competition has been embraced by over half a million spectators and millions of television viewers with four games still to be played. More viewers in China watched the game on state television than there are people in Australia.

For the first time I get the feeling that many Australians who have ambivalent feelings about the Asian century and this country's place in it have been able to see or experience one significant aspect of that through sport. They see countries whose political relations vary from outright hostility to diplomatic coldness coming together to play football sometimes of an outrageously exciting and controversial kind. The Iran versus Iraq quarter-final in Canberra will go down as one of the most extraordinary pieces of sporting theatre this country has witnessed. While I may be proved wrong, it seems to have come about without any of the off-field trouble that some blinkered media pundits and at least one better-informed football coach were expecting. A protest by Iran about the eligibility of one of the Iraqi players has been dismissed by the AFC Disciplinary Committee.

The unpredictability of football compared with most other top class sports has been confirmed once again. Japan came into the tournament as a virtually unbackable favourite to retain its title. Iran is top ranked football nation in Asia according to FIFA's, admittedly flawed, system. Neither will participate in the semi-finals after succumbing to penalty-shoot-out defeats by the United Arab Emirates and Iraq respectively. Iraq's team of heroes, once again, has shown extraordinary ability to succeed despite having to play all of its matches away from the war-torn country. The UAE has a coach who has brought a team of youngsters through from the junior ranks as a squad whose self-belief and self-knowledge may yet carry them further. They have a genuine superstar in Omar Abdulrahman, though he does not do much defensive work, and a lethal striker, Ali Mabkhout, and a miserly defence. They will be hard to beat from now on.

South Korea won the first two Asian Cups in 1956 and 1960 but hasn't won it since then. Now it has a team several members of which play in the top leagues in Europe and

a strong domestic competition. It topped Australia's group with a single goal victory in Brisbane over the Socceroos. As a collective it looks ominously strong, but it is no certainty to overcome Iraq.

That leaves the hosts. Coming into the tournament following a string of very ordinary results, it would be fair to say that outside the 'fans with laptops' who form the Australian soccer press, the players themselves and above all their coach, there was no great optimism that the Socceroos would progress. Ange Postecoglou was one of those players who had to work very hard to obtain and retain a place in a very good South Melbourne team in the National Soccer League. He was a full back, steady, reliable, unflashy, composed and had an unshakeable belief in himself and what he was trying to do for his team. He represented Australia against Czechoslovakia and New Zealand. When his playing days were over he became a coach and won back-to-back NSL championships with South Melbourne in 1997-98 and 1998-99. He took South to the World Club championship in Brazil in 2000. Then he won successive titles with Brisbane Roar in the A-League in 2011 and 2012.

Ray Gatt of the Australian has compared Ange to Wayne Bennett, the doyen of rugby league mentors, as coaching exemplars saying they both have the ability to get the very best out of their players. At South Melbourne, Brisbane, Melbourne Victory and now with the Socceroos, Postecoglou has shown that he can create and develop a system that is not dependent on particular players. Obviously if you have a unique talent like Tim Cahill you make the maximum use of him, but Ange has shown that he is prepared to rest Cahill to ensure that he is available for the final stages.

So can Australia go all the way to the title on home soil? That is a huge advantage and a packed stadium on the Hunter on Tuesday will do everything they can to will the Socceroos over the line. Provided they show the same discipline and commitment to the game plan that they did against China in the quarter-final and keep tabs on the UAE stars I believe they will reach the final. Like the coach, I am taking it one game at a time.

# Football Almanac

This week in the month of January in the world of football.

**18 January 1991** - Socceroo and Central Coast Mariners forward

**Mitchell Duke** born in Liverpool, Australia. He began his career with Parramatta Eagles before moving into the Central Coast Mariners' youth team. On 9 February 2011, Duke made his senior debut for the Mariners and also scored his first goal in a 3–1 win over Gold Coast United.

**20th January 1994** - **Matt Busby**, Scottish football player and manager, who managed Manchester United between 1945 and 1969, dies at 84. His managerial records and longevity at the helm of Manchester United are surpassed only by Sir Alex Ferguson. Survived the Munich air crash tragedy to rebuild the affectionately named Busby Babes and became the first English team to win the European Cup in 1968. As well as the Euro glory he won 5 English First Division League titles, 2 FA Cups and 5 Charity Shields.

**22nd January 1958** - **Nikos Anastopoulos**, Greek football player and manager. With 29 goals he is the all time highest scorer for the Greek national football team. Made his name at Olympiakos and currently coaches Panionios.

**26th January 1963** - **José Mourinho**, Portuguese football manager turns 52. In ten seasons of club management, Mourinho has led his club to win its domestic league seven times, the UEFA Champions League twice and the UEFA Cup once. He has won titles with Porto (Portugal), Chelse (England), Inter Milan (Italy) and Real Madrid (Spain) respectively. Between 2003 and 2012, Mourinho did not go a single calendar year without winning at least one trophy. Mourinho began his involvement in professional football as a player in the Portuguese Second Division. He studied sports science in Technical University of Lisbon and attended coaching courses in Britain. In Lisbon, he worked as a physical education teacher and had spells working as a youth team coach, a scout, and an assistant manager. In the early 1990s, he became an interpreter for Sir Bobby Robson at Sporting CP and Porto in Portugal, and Barcelona in Spain.

**24 January 1942** - 1974 World Cup Socceroo squad member **Ivo Rudic** born in Split, Croatia (d.22 November 2009). Played as a defender for Pan Hellenic (NSW).

**Eusebio**



**Ivo Rudic**



**Sir Matt Busby**



**Jose Mourinho**

**25 January 1942** - Portuguese football striker **Eusebio** born (d.3 January 2015). Nicknamed the Black Panther, the Black Pearl, he is considered one of the greatest footballers of all time. During his professional career, he scored 749 goals in 745 matches at club level and 41 goals for his national team, a total of 790 goals. He helped Portugal reach third place at the 1966 World Cup, being the top goalscorer of the tournament with nine goals (including four in one match against North Korea) and received the Bronze Ball award. He won the Ballon d'Or award for European footballer of the year in 1965 and was runner-up in 1962 and 1966.

**25 January 1985** - Matilda **Selin Kuralay** is born in Melbourne. Kuralay took up football as a six year old, playing for North Coburg. She later played with Ringwood City and Box Hill United. In 2001 she was jointly awarded (with Spase Dilevski) the Weinstein Medal as Victorian Junior Player of the Year. She is the only female footballer to have won the medal. Played college football for Florida State University and has enjoyed spells in the A-League with Adelaide United and Melbourne Victory.

**29th January 1980** - **Ivan Klasnic**, Croatian football player born. Klasnic made his mark as a striker in the Bundesliga for St Pauli and Werder Bremen, and also enjoyed stints at Nantes (France) and Bolton Wanderers (England). Klasnic underwent a kidney transplant, and became the first player to participate in a major tournament (UEFA Euro 2008) after a transplant. He also represented Croatia at UEFA Euro 2004 and the 2006 FIFA World Cup.

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### Katsa's Korner

**George Katsamboukas**

The Central Coast Mariners have just had a week that they would want to forget rather quickly.

A marketing campaign to increase the awareness and attendance of their game against Sydney FC which depicted Graham Arnold throwing a wad of cash into the air, and describing him as "Cashed Up Arnie", had the opposite effect on the Mariners Players, as rather than motivating them to get a favourable result, it left them disappointed with this negative campaign, against their old manager.

It also provided motivational fodder to the Sydney FC Players who responded accordingly with a 5-1 over the Mariners, a result that would have certainly had the Mariners Club Powerbrokers questioning the intentions of this

campaign.

They were quick to apologise to Arnold prior to the Game, however, he responded in kind with an emphatic victory.

Reports coming out of Newcastle are that after their 7-0 loss at the hands of Adelaide United on the weekend, the players refuse to play for Coach Phil Stubbins and as we went to press, were contemplating strike action, as they believe that Stubbins, and not them are to blame for their poor results thus far. However, Jets Owner Nathan Tinkler is sticking by Stubbins, indicating that the players are seeking to make Stubbins a scapegoat for their own failings, how this won plays out will be very interesting indeed.

The Socceroos have come of age after their qualification to the Asia Cup Final where they will meet Korea Republic.

Coach Ange Postecoglou's plan when taking on the National Role 14 months ago was based around a successful Asia Cup Campaign, which win, lose or draw in the final, has been achieved.

The Asia Cup is drawing to a close and questions have been raised by the Punters as to how a huge Australia Vs UAE Semi Final was played in Newcastle as opposed to a major City that have stadiums that can hold more spectators.

Adelaide and Perth spectators are questioning why there were a lack of Games in these Cities, the answer lies in the fact that 12 months ago, respective State Governments were asked to submit applications and funding for fixtures that they wanted played in their States, and these fixtures were then allocated to those States that provided funding for these events to take place.

Unfortunately for Adelaide and Perth Supporters, and Melbourne for a semi final to be held there, their respective State Governments did either not commit to funding for these games to be played there.

Until next week.

This is Katsa – Just as you have known him



## RAISING MY OPINION

Andre Zwan in NZ

Australia has once again shown the world that it can stage mouth watering events.

The Sydney Olympics, the Commonwealth Games and now the Asian Cup – a huge success. Wasn't too impressed with the opening ceremony but the organisation, spectator support and standard of football had me sitting up until midnight. If I have a gripe it is that our cousins across the Tasman did not consider the time difference between Australia and New Zealand hence me burning midnight oil and consuming two bottles of Chardonnay!

It was worth it.

Oh yeah! I have another gripe....the Sky commentators in Canberra. So boring and self-indulgent. That one commentator's voice...brrrrr!

For us football loving Kiwis in this rugby mad country watching the Asian Cup was a sheer delight. Great watching Palestine and Iraq. Magnificent watching the

# Asia Cup Excites Far And Wide

colourful fans in the stand. Well done Australia!

On the local front there is a lot of speculation regarding Nathan Burns's future at Wellington Phoenix. According to reports a Chinese club wants Burns and is prepared to pay US\$1.5million.

Coach Ernie Merrick said the club had not been approached and that he has been unsuccessful trying to contact the source – Burns's agent. Merrick who reinvented Burns when he was sidelined by Roar said overseas clubs have shown an interest in three or four other Phoenix players. He declined to elaborate. And why should he sell. Wellington Phoenix is a strong title contender in the A-league and Kiwi football is on the rise. Our Football Ferns are gearing up for the Women's World Cup.

Coming off the back of a win and a draw with 16th-ranked Denmark this week – Tony Readings' side – currently sitting at 18th in the world – will welcome world number seven Korea DPR and 10th-ranked Australia to Bill McKinlay Park in Auckland next month as New Zealand and the Westfield Matildas continue their build-up to the World Cup in June in Canada.

The Youth Development program also received a boost. New Zealand Football this week announced the appointment of Andy Boyens as Football Development manager.

In this role Boyens will oversee the New Zealand Football youth player and coach development programmes,

Boyens, a former All Whites defender with 19 international caps, was a member of the New Zealand squad which contested the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa and currently plays in the ASB Premiership with Waitakere United.

The 31-year-old also enjoyed a successful playing career in the MLS with four clubs including the LA Galaxy where he won the MLS in 2012.

Meanwhile, Steven Dillon has also joined the New Zealand Football organisation as Special Projects Manager.

Remember Paul Ifill, the Wellington Phoenix striker? The 35-year-old is ready to return to the park after recovering from an Achilles rupture in December, 2013.

Ifill, the club's all-time leading goal-scorer, still has aspirations of returning to the A-League and has been training with the Phoenix for several months.



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### Aisan Cup

Fri Jan 30 3 v 4 Place Match UAE v Iran  
8.00 pm Fox 4

Sat Jan 31 Final  
Australia v Korea 8.00 pm Fox 4

### A-League

Sun Feb 1 Melbourne City v Western Sydney  
5.00 pm Fox 4

Mon Feb 2 Brisbane v Wellington  
8.00 pm Fox 4

Fri Feb 6 Newcastle v Brisbane  
7.30 pm Fox 4

Sat Feb 7 Central Coast v Adelaide  
5.00 pm Fox 4

Sun Feb 7 Melb Victory v Melb City  
7.30 pm Fox 4

Sun Feb 7 Perth v Sydney  
9.30 pm Fox 4

Mon Feb 8 Wanderers v Wellington  
5.00 pm Fox 4

### English Premier League

Sat Jan 31 Hull v Newcastle  
11.35 pm Fox 4

Sun Feb 1 Liverpool v West Ham  
1.50 am Fox 1

Sun Feb 1 West Brom v Tottenham  
1.50 am Fox 3

Sun Feb 1 Man Utd v Leicester  
6.40 am

Mon Feb 2 Almeria v Getafe  
2.55 am

Mon Feb 2 Sevilla v Espanyol  
4.55 am

Mon Feb 2 Barcelona v Villarreal  
6.55 am

Mon Feb 2 Malaga v Valencia  
Fox 4



### Saturday 31-Jan

Bundesliga Round 18 Wolfsburg v Bayern Munich 6:30 AM LIVE  
Sky Bet Championship Round 28 Brentford v Middlesbrough 11:15 PM LIVE

### Sunday 1-Feb

Sky Bet Championship Round 28 TBC v TBC 2:00 AM TBC  
Sky Bet Championship Round 28 Nottm Forest v Millwall 2:00 AM TBC  
Africa Cup of Nations Quarter Final TBC v TBC 3:00 AM LIVE  
Serie A Round 21 Roma v Empoli 6:45 AM LIVE  
Bundesliga Round 18 Leverkusen v Dortmund 4:15 PM Delayed

### Monday 2-Feb

Scottish League Cup Semi Final Celtic v Rangers 12:30 AM LIVE  
Africa Cup of Nations Quarter Final TBC v TBC 6:00 AM LIVE  
Bundesliga Round 18 Werder Bremen v Hertha Berlin 3:45 PM Delayed

### Tuesday 3-Feb

Bundesliga Round 18 Stuttgart v Monchengladbach 8:00 AM Delayed  
Bundesliga Round 18 Schalke v Hannover 9:45 AM Delayed  
Ligue 1 Round 23 PSG v Rennes 7:30 PM Delayed

### Wednesday 4-Feb

Bundesliga Round 18 Augsburg v Hoffenheim 2:30 AM Delayed  
Bundesliga Round 19 Bayern Munich v Schalke 6:00 AM LIVE  
Bundesliga Round 19 Frankfurt v Wolfsburg 9:00 AM Delayed  
Bundesliga Round 19 Monchengladbach v Freiburg 10:45 AM Delayed

### Thursday 5-Feb

Africa Cup of Nations Semi Final TBC v TBC 6:00 AM LIVE  
Bundesliga Round 19 Dortmund v Augsburg 9:00 AM Delayed  
Bundesliga Round 19 Cologne v Stuttgart 10:45 AM Delayed  
Bundesliga Round 19 Hertha Berlin v Leverkusen 12:30 PM Delayed

1.50 am	Fox 4
Sun Feb 1	Crystal Palace v
Everton	
1.50 am	Red Button
Sun Feb 1	Stoke v QPR
1.50 am	Red Button
Sun Feb 1	Sunderland v Burnley
1.50 am	Red Button
Sun Feb 1	Chelsea v Man City
4.15 am	Fox 4
Mon Feb 2	Arsenal v Aston Villa
12.20 am	Fox 4
Mon Feb 2	S'pmon v Swansea
2.50 am	Fox 4

### La Liga

Sat Jan 31	Rayo Vallecano v
Deportivo	
6.40 am	Fox 4
Sun Feb 1	Real Madrid v Real
Sociedad	
1.55 am	Fox 2
Eibar v Atletico Madrid	
3.55 am	Fox 2
Sun Feb 1	Granada v Elche
5.55 am	Fox 2
Sun Feb 1	Celta v Cordoba
7.55 am	Fox 2
Sun Feb 1	Levante v Athletic
Bilbao	
9.55 pm	Fox 4
Mon Feb 2	Almeria v Getafe
2.55 am	Fox 1
Mon Feb 2	Sevilla v Espanyol
4.55 am	Fox 1
Mon Feb 2	Barcelona v Villarreal
6.55 am	Fox 1
Mon Feb 2	Malaga v Valencia
6.40 am	Fox 4

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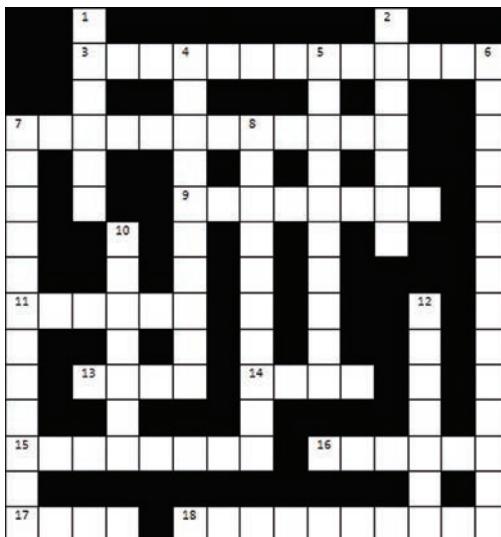
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# FOOTBALL



Compiled By Peter Simcox

**C****ACROSS:**

Answers On Page 39

3. Midfielder from Perth Glory, who played for Hull City, West Ham United and Colchester United in the UK (7, 6)
7. English manager of the Newcastle Jets (4, 8)
9. Brazilian striker from the Brisbane Roar (8)
11. The nickname of the EPL club from St Mary's Stadium (6)
13. This is when a player joins another club temporarily (4)
14. Martin O'Neill is head coach of this European Country (4)
15. This EPL club is nicknamed The Tigers (4, 4)
16. Blackburn, Bristol or Tranmere (6)
17. Chelsea and Italian midfielder who also coached Watford in the Championship (4)
18. Defender from Perth Glory, who was named in the Socceroos initial 40-man squad for the Asian Cup (4, 6)

**S****DOWN:**

1. German midfielder from Brisbane Roar (6)
2. The skipper of the Sky Blues (7)
4. Midfielder and Captain of the Central Coast Mariners (10)
5. Melbourne Victory's Brazilian midfielder (3, 7)
6. Socceroos striker who scored 13 goals against American Samoa in 2001 (6, 8)
7. Spanish striker from Adelaide United (5, 7)
8. Keeper from the Hunter Stadium (3, 7)
10. When a player scores for the opposition (3, 4)
12. The home of Australian Brad Jones' EPL club (7)

## VIC'S QUICK QUIZ

Brains Trust:  
Vic Brincat

### World Stadia

1. What is the name of Boca Juniors home ground.

2. Name Paris St Germain's stadium.

3. How many spectators does Bayern Munich's Allianz Arena hold. (64,689), (68,584) or (71,137).

4. What is the third largest stadium in England.

5. Who plays at Santiago Bernabeu.

6. Which French team plays at Stade Velodrome.

7. In what country would you find the Estadio da Luz.



Question 15

8. Which Brazilian stadium once held a record 199,854 spectators.

9. This Scottish Stadium hosted the 1960 European Cup final in front of 127,000 fans.

10. What is the largest football stadium in Brisbane.

11. Name Italy's three largest stadiums in correct order.

12. Name Ajax football club's home stadium.

13. What was the name of Manchester City old stadium.

14. Name the American stadium that hosted the 1994 World Cup Final.

15. At what stadium is the clock pictured located.

Question 14



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## V-League

By Jimmy Soufis



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## Carlton keep pressure on Pascoe

### Men's Round 13

Opening up the men's for the week we saw in form Ashburton take on struggling Metropolitan. Metro put up a very strong fight but were edged at the death as Ashburton held out for a 6-5 win. Second up Vic Vipers took on Fitzroy as both sides looked to firm up an FAFL Cup birth. It was a tight affair all game long but Fitzroy held out for a 2-1 win. Top placed Pascoe Vale took on Hume. It was Hume who got off to the better start racing to a 3-1 lead and looking like causing a huge upset. Pascoe came back though and managed to steal all three points winning it late through Sofiane Soufi 5-4. The final game of the night saw second placed Carlton take on bottom placed Balwyn. From the outset Carlton looked dominant and they ran out 11-5 winners to keep up the pressure

on Pascoe Vale.

### Women's Round 12

We began the women's side of things with Richmond taking on Melbourne Uni in a blockbuster opening clash. It proved a very defensive clash between the pair and it ended with Melbourne Uni winning 1-0 with the only goal being scored by import Jamilla Hull. Next up Ashburton and Brunswick locked horns and it was very different to the opening clash with goal flying in left right and centre as Ashburton held off a fast finishing Brunswick to run out 8-5 winners. The final game of the night saw struggling Vipers take on a new look Carlton Heart. The Vipers grabbed the first goal of the night but were pegged back as Carlton stole a point of the second placed side.

NIKE V-League Ladder

Rank	Team	Played	Points
1	Pascoe Vale FC	13	34
2	FC Carlton	13	28
3	Vic Vipers FC	13	24
4	Ashburton FC	13	22
5	Fitzroy FC	13	20
6	Hume FC	13	9
7	Metropolitan FC	13	9
8	FC Balwyn	13	3

01 Feb 5:00PM

Hume FC

Court 1

FC Balwyn

01 Feb 6:00PM

Pascoe Vale FC

Court 1

Ashburton FC

01 Feb 7:00PM

Metropolitan FC

Court 1

Vic Vipers FC

01 Feb 8:00PM

Fitzroy FC

Court 1

FC Carlton

# Koren ready to light City's fire

After missing the first 10 games of the season with injury, Robert Koren announced his belated arrival to the A-League with a hat-trick in Round 13. Melbourne City fans hope there's more of the same to come.

Melbourne City fans must have feared the worst when news emerged early on in the season that marquee signing Robert Koren would be out for an extended period of time through a persistent calf injury. Injury problems had disrupted the City (nee Heart) careers of other star signings including Josip Skoko, Fred, Harry Kewell and Orlando Engelaar.

The Slovenian had come into the competition with premium European pedigree having spent his early years developing his skills in his native Slovenia before earning himself a move to Norwegian side Lillestrom in 2004. Under the guidance of former Manchester City striker and German international Uwe Rosler, Koren became an integral part of a side that challenged for European spots over the next three seasons.

His performances in Scandinavia drew comparisons with Slovenian football legend and childhood hero Zlatko Zahovic as clubs from several of Europe's top league turned the attention towards signing the 26 year old. It was Championship club West Bromwich Albion who lured Koren to English football, beating fellow second tier side Leeds United for the midfielder's signature.

It did not take long for Koren to make his mark on English football as he became instrumental in the Baggies attempts to return to the top flight. However a play-off defeat to Derby County and a freak eye injury early on in the following season were some of the initial setbacks he had to endure. Once fully fit, Koren helped Tony Mowbray's side earn promotion with the Scotsman describing him as a model professional.

This professionalism extended on into the Premier League where he was one of the side's top performers in a rather disappointing campaign which saw them relegated. Despite this, Koren stayed on with the club as they went back down to the Championship again but was not offered a contract renewal in 2010 by new manager Roberto Di Matteo.

Meanwhile on the international level, Koren was at his



inspirational best as he captained Slovenian to their second World Cup appearance since independence in 1991. In reaching South Africa, the tiny Balkan nation defeated the highly fancied and Guus Hiddink led Russia side in a two legged play-off.

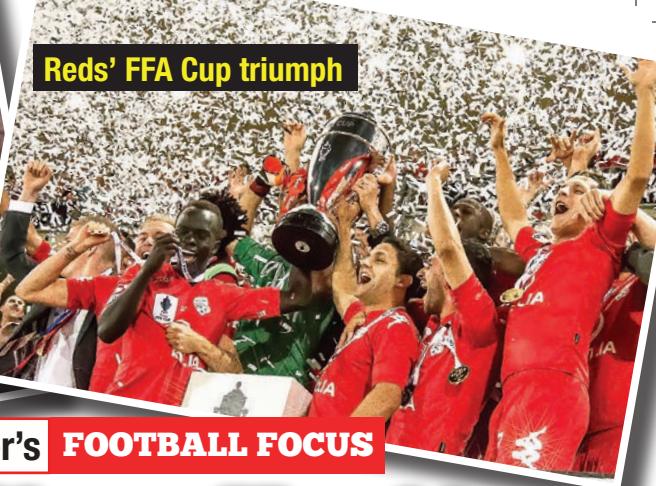
At the tournament proper, Slovenia impressed but narrowly missed out on qualification from the group stage with a late collapse in a 2-2 draw against the United States and a 1-0 defeat to England proving critical. However Koren did manage to grab the honour of scoring late on in his country's opening game 1-0 victory over Algeria in what is their only World Cup win to date.

His form in South Africa and previous experience in England saw the recently relegated Hull City sign him up on a two year contract. At the KC Stadium, Koren became a

fan favourite as his eye for the spectacular, mazy runs and technical quality excited the terraces. Manager Steve Bruce rewarded him with a contract extension in 2012 and he was instrumental into their rise into the Premier League in 2013 as the Tigers secured promotion under Koren's captaincy.

Despite making 22 appearances in the Premier League, which included scoring a memorable brace against Fulham, and helping the club reach the FA Cup Final, Koren was released by the club at season's end. In need of a new challenge, the Slovenian was won over by the ambitious project of the City Group who helped lure him to Australia and the A-League as he became Melbourne City's new marquee.

With injuries ruining his early days at the club, Koren is hoping to make up for lost time. A debut off the bench in a memorable derby victory over Victory and a stunning hat-trick against the Jets in his third game for the club have showcased his supreme quality. Now the task is continue on with that form when City take on the struggling Wanderers this Sunday at AAMI Park following the three-week mid-season hiatus.



Simon Maher's **FOOTBALL FOCUS**

# Reds and Glory - Marching Back to the Higher Ground?

The Hyundai A-League bursts back to life this weekend with Adelaide United and Perth Glory primed to continue their ascent back to the summit of Australian football. Adelaide kick start the resumption of the A-League after the Asian Cup break with Saturday afternoons clash with the Newcastle Jets at Coopers Stadium, whilst the Glory welcome Melbourne Victory to NIB Stadium on Sunday.

With Perth perched on top spot of the ladder and the Reds only 6 points away in fourth spot these clubs are looking to return their state's football to former glories. In the days of the NSL Adelaide was a hotbed of football, boasting two of the foundation teams of that pioneering competition, West Adelaide and Adelaide City. These clubs claimed 5 championships and 2 runners up finishes during the days of the former premier national competition. West triumphed in 1978 before Zoran Matic commanded City to the title in 1986 before dominating club football between 1991 and 1995, claiming 2 championships and two second placing's and setting the blueprint for professionalism in Australian football.

There was little surprise when the Hyundai A-League began in 2005 that the Adelaide Reds set the early pace in that competition as well. With home town son John Kosmina in the hot seat the Reds claimed the inaugural A-League Premiership in 2005-2006, and were runners up in the following two seasons. Along the way there was a breath taking journey to the Final of the Asian AFC Cup as well as the FIFA World Club Cup in 2008.

Perth Glory has similar rosy memories of past achievements. When they barnstormed into the NSL in season 1996-97 Perth were the first team from Australia's West Coast to enter the National League. Before long they raised the bar for domestic football to new levels. Under the bold leadership of owner Nick Tana Perth dominated the NSL winning Premierships in 1999-2000, 2001-2002 and 2003-2004, as well as championships in 2003 and 2004.

Perth Glory became synonymous with professionalism off the pitch and daring attacking football on it building a colourful and devoted fan base during the NSL era. It remains a curious

anomaly that Perth remain the only Australian based club in the A-League with an empty trophy cabinet after nine years of competition. Their closest brushes with silverware being defeats at the hands of the Brisbane Roar in the A-League Grand Final of 2012 and Adelaide most recently in the FFA Cup Final. Past successes and recent underachievement are prime motivators for these clubs. Perth has caught many off guard with their resurgence, accumulating an impressive array of scalps away from home including Melbourne Victory and Sydney FC. They have bolstered their squad signing exciting left sided forward Dragan Paljic from Eredivisie club Heracles Almelo. Livewire coach Kenny Lowe will be looking for a packed home crowd to lift the Glory to the levels they were playing at prior to the break. Victory will be razor keen to gain some revenge for their last meeting and will rely on ever improving Carl Valeri to cover absent Captain Mark Milligan in the engine room.

Adelaide coach Josep Gombau will be seeking a slice of consistency to add to the exciting recipe that he has concocted in Adelaide. The Reds have played some breath taking football but will be looking to make up the 6 points which separate them from Perth Glory at the top of the ladder. On paper they have what looks to be a straight forward assignment against the hapless Newcastle Jets at home on Saturday. The Jets are one short step from the bottom of the table and have been besieged by off field upheavals. At face value it is difficult to imagine the Reds not re-igniting their season with 3 points.

However the break for the Asian Cup has provided all teams with a chance to regroup and it will be fascinating to observe how teams respond to the brief hiatus. It is arguable that the Adelaide Reds and Perth Glory have the most to gain, but paradoxically also the most to lose. Each will be twitching to jump out of the blocks and recapture their early season form, but they will encounter opponents who have been feverishly working on ways of closing the gap. This week-ends games will offer a glimpse of which team has the mettle to continue their climb to the top.

### NPL Round 1

**South Melbourne vs Oakleigh Cannons FC** 8:15 PM / Thu 19 Feb  
Lakeside Stadium

**Bentleigh Greens vs North Geelong Warriors** 8:30 PM / Fri 20 Feb  
Kingston Heath Soccer Complex

**Melbourne Knights vs Avondale FC** 8:30 PM / Fri 20 Feb Knights Stadium

**Hume City vs Port Melbourne Sharks** 3:00 PM / Sun 22 Feb  
Broadmeadows Valley Park

**Werribee City vs Dandenong Thunder** 3:00 PM / Sun 22 Feb  
Galvin Park

**Heidelberg United vs Pascoe Vale** 4:00 PM / Sun 22 Feb  
Olympic Village

**Green Gully vs Northcote City** 8:30 PM / Mon 23 Feb  
Green Gully Reserve

**By Skip Fulton**  
**Photo: JOHN PUNSHON**



Green Gully and South Melbourne will expect to be chasing top NPL honours this season.

## Counting Down the Days to NPL 2015

Just four weeks remain before the opening match of the 2015 NPL Victoria season kick-offs on Thursday February 19 at Lakeside Stadium. The match between title holders South Melbourne and Oakleigh Cannons is set to draw sizeable crowd based on the history between these two teams and the 3000 odd who attended last years season opener.

This season will see further expansion of the NPL with the addition of six new teams: Eastern Lions, Moreland City, Nunawading City, Murray United, Melbourne Victory and Melbourne City. The top tier of Victorian football also welcomes Avondale FC (formerly Avondale Heights) and North Geelong Warrior, both promoted from the NPL1. The inclusion of Melbourne Victory and City in the NPL1 has created a flow of players to these Senior and Under 20 teams that haven't competed at this level before. Whilst the composition of these line-ups will draw from a wide base, the volume of bonus points provided will be of little compensation to clubs losing some of their best talent.

These new clubs combined with higher than normal transfer numbers has resulted in the January pre-season being a hive of activity. FFA Cup success story Bentleigh Greens were first off the rank when they hosted 2014 Malaysian Super League Champions Johor Southern Tigers. Johor were on tour in Australia to coincide with the Asian Cup and played two friendlies at Kingston Heath. Bentleigh drew 1-1 with the champions who then backed up the following night to record a 2-2 draw with Dandenong Thunder.

A number of other clubs have so far taken to the pitch; the

most active has been South Melbourne with five friendlies already under the belt. The title holders have faced off against Dandenong City, Frankston Pines, Langwarrin SC, Kingston City and Springvale White Eagles. Captain Michael Eager spoke of the pre-season preparation at the club saying "in comparison to this time last year, when we're four to five weeks out, I think we are looking a lot better to be honest. We can see the continuation from last year as well". South Melbourne will be joining Hume City and Northcote travelling to Adelaide for pre-season camps whilst Pascoe Vale heads to Tasmania to take on South Hobart.

NPL new-comers Avondale and North Geelong have also graced the park in their preparation for this year. Avondale made the trek south where they secured a win over Dandenong Thunder 2-1 whilst North Geelong were victorious over Whittlesea Ranges and Murray United.

One of the other changes this season is the relocation of Pascoe Vale SC away from their traditional match day home of Hosken Reserve. As reported by Goal! Weekly last year, Pascoe Vale will be relocating to the newly upgraded CB Smith Reserve in Fawkner. The multi-purpose facility has undergone a \$6.4m upgrade by the City of Moreland and will play host not just to Pascoe Vale but also NPL1 club Moreland Zebras, providing the teams with first class facilities and a brand new surface.

The structure of the 2015 NPL season will provide greater incentive to teams throughout the whole year with the top six teams will play off in a finals format.



## FFV launches Community Shield

The FFV Community Shield has been unveiled as the first official match of the 2015 football season between Melbourne Knights and South Melbourne. Each year the NPL Victoria Champions and Dockerty Cup Champions will compete in the pre-season match-up for the opportunity to add to their trophy cabinet. In line with the community theme, the contest will be held in support of Football Federation Victoria's corporate social responsibility partner.

In 2015, that partner is World Vision's One Goal program which aims to leverage the power of football to tackle malnutrition in Asia and Australia. Approximately 200 million children across Asia are affected by chronic malnutrition, with more than 18 million of these affected by increasing over-nutrition (obesity).

Melbourne Knights vice-captain Tomi Uskok described the Community Shield as "a good initiative. It gives something more to pre-season and something to look forward to with two big clubs going at it". When asked about the challenge in playing South Melbourne Uskok said "They are always fiery and exciting. It's the original Melbourne Derby so it's always exciting for the players to look forward to big games and for the fans."

Michael Eager has had the honour of winning the Victorian Premier League in 2013 with Northcote and then

the inaugural National Premier League Victoria with South Melbourne in 2014. It is no surprise then that he is accustomed to big games and the Community Shield is no different. "With the club, board and players there is always an expectation we win things so to start off with a game like this, a very competitive one against what will be a very good Melbourne Knights team hopefully gives us an opportunity to get one trophy in the cabinet to start the season off" he said.

Melbourne Knights assistant coach and former Socceroo goalkeeper Frank Juric reflected on the international heritage of Community Shield football that is now in Victoria saying "It's played all over Europe and it's basically called a Community Shield or a Charity Shield. I know in Germany last year it was played between Dortmund and Bayern Munich. In Europe I guess it's the norm. It's great to see the initiative is now being done here with the NPL in Victoria. It gives the players a bit more of a buzz that there's another Cup to involved and hopefully we can win it this year against our old rivals South Melbourne Hellas".

The inaugural event will be played between South Melbourne and Melbourne Knights on Friday, February 13 at Knights Stadium.

## FOXTEL NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE

# City can close in on the championship, says Palatsides



**Shaun  
Moran**

**C**ity can close in on the championship, says Palatsides

Melbourne City boss Joe Palatsides has emphasised the need for his side to retain its focus in the forthcoming five rounds as it seeks to achieve its quest of taking out the Foxtel National Youth League title.

Although returning to the top of the table after trumping Sydney FC in the final minute of injury time in Ballarat on Saturday, it was far from an easy ride for Palatside's men, who needed a 93rd minute penalty from Hernan Espindola to ensure they returned to Melbourne with all three points.

Northcote City's Wade Dekker had City on its way on the hour mark, before Charles Lokoli Ngoy's goal fifteen minutes from time looked to have stolen a point for the visitors.

The winner did eventually come for Melbourne in the game's closing moments to the delight of their coach.

"I congratulated the boys for working hard," Palatsides said.

"We had a bit of a lull in that second half but we never stopped trying. That perseverance and determination was what got us over the line."

A trip to the AIS to face the hapless FFA Centre of Excellence appears to be a straightforward proposal for the league flyers, yet Palatsides is taking nothing for granted at this stage of the competition.

"The youth league's pretty evenly balanced," he affirmed.

"Even if the AIS only have one point, they don't get blown out of the water very often, so if you're not on your game, anything can happen. We'll be trying to guard against complacency.

"But for us, with five games to go, we really want to finish the season off



Hernan Espindola (left), Wade Dekker (centre) and Jonathan Germano celebrate Melbourne City's first goal. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

strongly. We emphasised that before the game and we do well, there's every chance that these boys will be champions of the league and they'd deserve it because of all the hard work they've put in."

The City coach went on to throw his backing behind Morshead Park in Ballarat as a venue, which he believes is more than

capable of hosting an A-League match for points in the future.

"I don't see why not," he said.

"I'm not too sure if certain criteria's have to be met, [but] if there was an FFA Cup game played here it would have to be very close [to meeting those requirements]."

**Answers to Quick Quiz –** 1) La Bombonera. 2) Parc des Princes. 3) 71,137. 4) The Emirates Stadium. 5) Real Madrid. 6) Olympique de Marseille. 7) Portugal. 8) The Maracana. 9) Hampden Park. 10) Suncorp Stadium. 11) (1) Stadio Giuseppe Meazza, (2) Stadio Olimpico, (3) Stadio San Paolo. 12) Amsterdam Arena 13) Maine Road. 14) Rose Bowl Pasadena. 15) Old Trafford.

## FOXTEL NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE ROUND 13

ALL KO TIMES ARE LOCAL

**Next Round**

Sun 1 Feb FFA Centre of Excellence v Melbourne City FC Australian Institute of Sport Grass 2, Bruce 12:00 PM

Sun 1 Feb Perth Glory v Sydney FC Intiga Stadium, Inglewood 11:00 AM

Sun 1 Feb Central Coast Mariners v Newcastle Jets CCM Centre of Excellence, Tuggerah 3:00 PM

Sun 1 Feb Melbourne Victory v Western Sydney Wanderers FC Lakeside Stadium, Albert Park 3:00 PM

Sun 1 Feb Adelaide United v Brisbane Roar FC Adelaide Shores Football Centre 3:00 PM

NYL soccer action from Adelaide United's 3-0 win over Melbourne Victory in Round 12. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

**RESULTS**

Newcastle Jets	2
Perth Glory	0
Adelaide United	4
FFA CoE	0
Melbourne Victory	3
Mariners	2
Newcastle Jets	P
Sydney FC	P
Western Sydney	1
FFA CoE	2

**STANDINGS**

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Melbourne City	13	8	2	3	29	21	+8	26
2 Perth Glory	12	7	2	3	23	16	+7	23
3 Brisbane Roar	12	7	1	4	18	16	+2	22
4 Adelaide United	13	6	2	5	20	13	+7	20
5 Western Sydney	12	6	0	6	16	18	-2	18
6 Mariners	13	5	2	6	29	23	+6	17
7 Melbourne Victory	13	5	2	6	21	26	-5	17
8 Newcastle Jets	12	5	1	6	21	21	+0	16
9 Sydney FC	12	4	3	5	22	18	+4	15
10 FFA CoE	12	1	1	10	8	35	-27	4

## NYL returns back to action

**JORDAN LIM**

It's the end of school holidays as the NYL boys got back onto the pitch after a three-week Asian Cup break, and with it came a new league leader. Melbourne City's 2-1 win over Sydney FC was just the start they needed to the second half of the season, as Perth Glory made it three starts without a win in their 2-0 loss to Newcastle Jets.

As mentioned, Melbourne City took advantage of their compatriots slip-up, albeit without their fair share of difficulty. Former South Melbourne under 20's winger Stefan Zinni played his part in the opening goal on the hour mark, dinking the ball back from a wide position into the path of Wade Dekker, who continued his hot streak by bundling the ball over the line. Charles Lokoli Ngoyi is another in some decent NYL form and the young man added his fourth for the season from a set play. With time ticking down, it was Zinni who again found

himself in the action as he earned a 95th minute penalty, which was dispatched by Hernan Espindola.

Adelaide United climbed into the top four with a 4-0 thrashing of the FFA Centre of Excellence, who once again find themselves anchored to the bottom of the table. A brace each to Antoni Trimboli and Dylan Smith compounded misery on the national pathway side. Trimboli found the opener just before the half-time break, as the winger cut inside to meet Bruce Kamau cross from the right. Smith struck on 63 minutes, showing poise and control before placing the ball across the face of goals to double the lead. The floodgates poured open soon after as Trimboli completed his brace with an outside of the box strike before Smith struck true off the half-volley to make it four unanswered.

Sunday afternoon almost saw Melbourne Victory youth foreshadow their senior counterparts, nearly coughing up a three-goal lead before eventually

holding on for a 3-2 win with ten men. Andrew Nabourra ran the show early, contributing two goals and an assist within the first hour. But goals to substitute Trent Buhagiar and Brian Jamba – a stunning free-kick with under 20 minutes to play – set up a tense finish. The nerves further increased as skipper Christopher Cristaldo earned himself an early shower on 80 minutes but the Navy Blue held on for a much needed win.

Perth Glory will be feeling the heat and a match-up against Sydney FC may just be what they need to get their best form back. Pencil leaders Melbourne City in for another win as they face the COE early Sunday afternoon.

**Answers to Crossword –**

**Across:** 3) Richard Garcia, 7) Phil Stubbins, 9) Henrique, 11) Saints, 13) Loan, 14) Eire, 15) Hull City, 16) Rovers, 17) Zola, 18) Josh Risdon  
**Down:** 1) Broich, 2) Brosque, 4) Hutchinson, 5) Gui Finkler, 6) Archie Thompson, 7) Pablo Sanchez, 8) Ben Kennedy, 10) Own Goal, 12) Anfield,

# ASK THE EXPERTS: Rd 16

**THE VERDICT** Adelaide 14-0 Jets Draw 1 Melb City 13-2 Wanderers Draw 0  
 Mariners 11-3 Sydney FC Draw 1 Brisbane 8-4 Phoenix Draw 3 Glory 11-4 Victory Draw 0

**Santo Cilauro** **37**

Adelaide  
Draw  
Glory  
Melb City  
Draw  
**Last week: 2**



Santo, Sam & Ed Show

**George Donikian** **34**

Adelaide  
Mariners  
Glory  
Melb City  
Phoenix  
**Last week: 2**



Media Mogul

**George Calombaris** **36**

Adelaide  
Sydney FC  
Victory  
Melb City  
Phoenix  
**Last week: 2**



No.1 Victory ticket holder

**Andy Harper** **34**

Adelaide  
Mariners  
Glory  
Melb City  
Brisbane  
**Last week: 2**



NSL Champ / Fox Sports

**Ross Alatsas** **34**

Adelaide  
Mariners  
Glory  
Melb City  
Brisbane  
**Last week: 2**



Radio Hellas 1422 3XY

**Jimmy Campbell** **38**

Adelaide  
Mariners  
Glory  
Melb City  
Roar  
**Last week: 1**



Former Socceroo

**Roger Sleeman** **34**

Adelaide  
Mariners  
Glory  
Melb City  
Brisbane  
**Last week: 2**



Tipping Champ 2013

**John Doyle** **34**

Adelaide  
Mariners  
Glory  
Melb City  
Phoenix  
**Last week: 2**



Original Captain Socceroo

**Peter Katholos** **38**

Adelaide  
Sydney  
Victory  
Wanderers  
Draw  
**Last week: 2**



Former Socceroo

**Eddie Krncevic** **32**

Adelaide  
Mariners  
Glory  
Melb City  
Brisbane  
**Last week: 3**



Former Socceroo

**Jimmy Rooney** **32**

Draw  
Mariners  
Victory  
Melb City  
Brisbane  
**Last week: 1**



World Cup '74 Socceroo

**John Perin** **35**

Adelaide  
Mariners  
Glory  
Melb City  
Brisbane  
**Last week: 2**



Hall of Fame Socceroo

**George Campbell** **33**

Adelaide  
Mariners  
Victory  
Wanderers  
Phoenix  
**Last week: 2**



Sth Melb & NSL Legend

**Steve Blair** **33**

Adelaide  
Sydney  
Glory  
Melb City  
Brisbane  
**Last week: 2**



Former Socceroo

**Kiss Of Death** **37**

Adelaide  
Mariners  
Glory  
Melb City  
Draw  
**Last week: 2**



GW Contributors

## Become a Football Star

Melbourne Football STARS will continue its relationship at Ringwood City FC this year with its Player Development Program at Jubilee Park, Ringwood.

MFS look forward to passing on our experiences and knowledge to children so that they can gain a broad understanding of football skills, technique and teamwork, and enjoy the game that has given us so much.

Sessions will be held at Jubilee Park on Mondays and Fridays (4.30pm onwards) throughout each school term commencing on Monday 9th February for Boys and Girls aged 8 to 16 year olds. The program is open to players outside of Ringwood City so come along and 'experience the dream'.

The cost of the 10 week program is U8-U11 - \$180 and U12-U18 - \$225.

For more information contact former Aberdeen and South Melbourne star George Campbell at [gcampbell@melbourne-footballstars.com.au](mailto:gcampbell@melbourne-footballstars.com.au)



# Asia Cup's extensive Latin connection

Daniel Campos

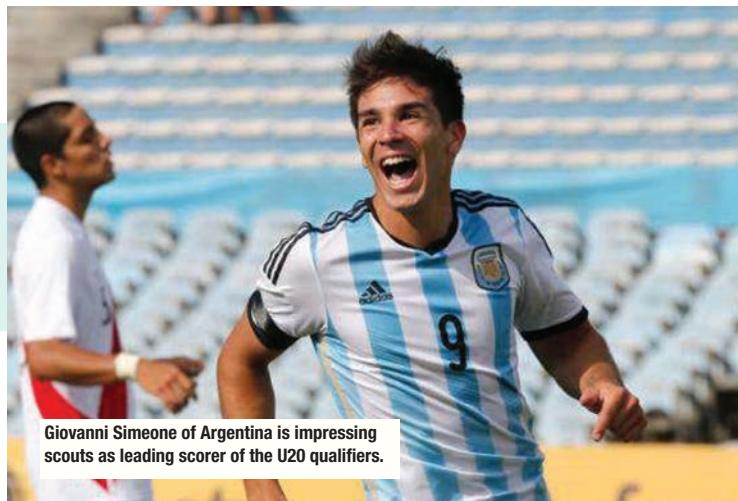
There are many links that unite Asia as a region with Brazil. With Sao Paulo and Lima, Peru one of the largest Japanese populations outside Tokyo, our maiden tournament held across the eastern seaboard, the AFC's signature Asian Cup attracts more interest than what one would expect.

The Japanese ultras present from Maitland in the Hunter region at training sessions for example could be deemed surreal or adventurous and exciting to say the least but as our economy is strongly linked to Asia and as Australian football keeps growing and forging relationships, the bridge is closing rapidly.

And with Brazilian football at international level almost on its knees, it can definitely serve as an alternative breath of fresh air for its six-figure TV audience market by watching Javier Aguirre's Samurai Blue conquer and defend its Asian title.

All respective state governments, the FFA in conjunction with the AFC have reported to be pleased with the running, planning and organisation of a tournament with this calibre. Such is the pedigree and attraction spanning as far and wide into Palestine, its large continent in Chile and Argentina, onto the Middle East, China and the Far East that football brings the cultures together. The stands have shown vibrancy and have been so loud with emotions running high, not only has it brought the communities together through football but it is showcasing Australia's growing football media and its infrastructure.

The Japan FA translator working alongside Aguirre at the AFC Asian Cup is Argentine born of Japanese descent and catered very well for the sizeable media contingent in the mid-week group stage win over Jordan. Coach Aguirre admitted that his side did not prepare enough for the penalty shoot-out against the United Arab Emirates.



Giovanni Simeone of Argentina is impressing scouts as leading scorer of the U20 qualifiers.

Now that Japan got knocked-out there is speculation Aguirre will get the sack.

Palestine has captured hearts with their sole presence in the tournament and by showcasing their football to the wider region, they are surely to take note of what they have learnt in order to progress and further develop their football.

Their Chilean links with Matias Jadue and Alexis Norambuena did not entirely work out, with both pulling out due to FIFA eligibility and injury respectively.

Doha, Abu Dhabi, and Riyadh have also seen coaches hired from across Latin America for both its national teams and top-level clubs.

## FIFA U20 QUALIFIERS

Another four countries have booked their spots for the FIFA under-20 World Cup in New Zealand. The North and Central American (CONCACAF) qualifying tournament finished in Jamaica last week with Mexico, Panama, Honduras and the United States sealing their positions, bringing the total number of countries to qualify to 16. Mexico and Panama qualified in impressive style after finishing unbeaten at the top of their groups, securing an

automatic ticket to New Zealand. Mexico established an unassailable lead in their group with a match to spare, while Panama won all five of their group matches without conceding a goal.

The other two qualifiers, Honduras and USA, secured their spots after overcoming tricky playoff matches against Guatemala and El Salvador. Eight spots remain up for grabs, with the four South American qualifiers due to be known early next month. So far in the South American under-20 championship, Argentina, Paraguay and Peru are still standing in Group A alongside hosts Uruguay, Brazil and Colombia.

The stakes now rise. Four of the remaining six will make it through to this year's Under-20 World Cup. One will join host Brazil in next year's Olympics; another will go into a playoff.

Some of the players who do well over the next two weeks will be fast-tracked into the senior squad of their national team. Many will hope to catch the eye and enter the notebook of the army of scouts from European clubs who have gone to Uruguay to watch the action at close quarters.

# Football Almanac

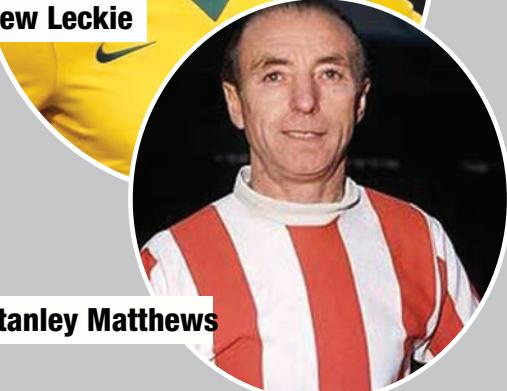
This week in the month of February in the world of football.

31st January 1985 - Adam Federici born in Nowra, NSW. Australian goalkeeper who plays for English Championship club Reading and has 8 caps for the Socceroos.



**Matthew Leckie**

1st February 1915 - Stanley Matthews, 1st British soccer player to be knighted, born (d.23rd February 2000). He spent nineteen years with Stoke City, playing for the "Potters" from 1932 to 1947, and again from 1961 to 1965. He helped Stoke to the Second Division title in 1932–33 and 1962–63. In between his two spells at Stoke he spent fourteen years with Blackpool; where he became an FA Cup winner in 1953 (known as the Matthews Final), after he was on the losing side in the 1948 and 1951 finals. Between 1937 and 1957 he won 54 caps for England, playing in the FIFA World Cup in 1950 and 1954, and winning nine British Home Championship titles.



**Stanley Matthews**

1 February 2008 - FFA formally announced their intention to bid for the 2018 FIFA World Cup, 2022 FIFA World Cup and the 2015 AFC Asian Cup

1 February 2012 - At least 73 people are killed in the Egyptian football riots in Port Said, following an Egyptian Premier League football match between El Masry and El Ahly clubs. Because of the riot, Egyptian government banned the domestic league matches for two years, which badly affected Egyptian football and the national team.

3 February 1967 - Current coach of the Young Socceroos Aurelio Vidmar born. Aurelio started his professional career with local Adelaide team Adelaide City before moving to Europe in the mid-1990s to Belgium, where he was the league's top scorer in the 1994–95 season. He also played in Spain, Switzerland, Netherlands and in Japan before returning to Australia in 1999 to rejoin City. Vidmar was a member of the Socceroos team for 12 years and was a member of three unsuccessful FIFA World Cup qualification campaigns. He played and scored against Diego Maradona's Argentina in Australia's final qualifying ties in 1993. Won 44 caps and scored 17 goals between 1991–2001.

4 February 2013 - Europol announces it will investigate over 680 football matches alleged to involve match fixing. Details of the investigation revealed that crime syndicates based in Singapore paid

almost €2,000,000 in bribes—with the largest individual bribe being €140,000—to fix matches, with accomplices in Europe placing bets via the internet with bookmakers in Asia; these bets would be illegal in Europe, but unregulated in Asia. The scam reportedly produced profits of over €8,000,000. The majority of matches affected by match-fixing were reportedly played as part of German, Swiss and Turkish football leagues. Further matches in Asia, Africa and Latin and South America were also identified as having been affected. Two World Cup qualifying matches were also named as being under suspicion.

4 February 1991 - Socceroo forward Mathew Leckie born in Melbourne. Currently plays for Bundesliga 2nd Division side FC Ingolstadt 04. Started his career at Victorian State League Division 1 outfit, Bulleen Lions, before bursting on the local scene with Adelaide United and earning a move to Borussia Monchengladbach. Leckie had an outstanding 2014 World Cup in Brazil resulting in pundits estimating his worth at \$10 million..

5 February 1976 - Former Socceroo striker (27 goals in 55 apps) John Aloisi born in Adelaide. In a professional career that spanned 20 seasons, with league totals of 459 games and 127 goals, he was the first Australian ever to play and score in La Liga, the Premier League and Serie A. Scored the decisive penalty against Uruguay in the 2006 FIFA World Cup playoffs, after a 1–1 aggregate tie. That goal meant Australia qualified to the FIFA World Cup for the first time since 1974.



5th February 1948 - Sven-Göran Eriksson, Swedish football manager born. Eriksson won 17 major trophies as a manager, with a variety of league clubs in Sweden, Portugal and Italy, between 1979 and 2000.



# Saints Keep Marching In

## George Galpin in the UK

Perhaps the happiest readers of this column so far in 2015 would not be those who hail those from the Blue part of West London, even though Chelsea are top of the league, nor those with a persuasion of the red of North London; but the Premier League fans nearest to you guys in Oz on the South Coast of England, Southampton.

Yes, Chelsea may be in the driving seat and yes Arsenal may have proven that they can win games against fellow big teams away from home, but that would be denying arguably the biggest success story of the Premier League campaign so far; the Saints are indeed marching on after a stormy preseason.

After a summer that seen six of the stars of 2013/14 depart, as well as the manager Mauricio Pochettino to Spurs, it's certainly a real surprise to see Ronald Koeman's team not only beating the critics who tipped them for relegation, but to see the team above every single team that bought players or staff from the Saints in the summer.

It is a real testament to how the club is structured that players who were at the club for long periods, such as Rickie Lambert and Adam Lallana, have not been missed, such is the success of former Eredivisie stars Dušan Tadić and Graziano Pellè, both players hugely admired during Koeman's spell at Feyenoord.

But arguably that is Koeman's real triumph, the transfer market, that is why the club are doing so well. It is almost unheard of to think that a club that hasn't been relegated could sell off more than half of the team from

the season before, including Artur Boruc on loan at Bournemouth, and do so well.

However, the club received premiums for their players, who were predominantly English, and then used those funds cleverly in order to not only replace those who left, but to fit them into the system the club like to play with.

That even goes down to the manager, with Koeman having similar values around football as his predecessor Pochettino. The highest compliments that can be paid to the likes of Pellè and Tadić is that the players they replaced have not been missed, not in a on-pitch sense or in fitting them in the system, they are that similar in style.

Talk of a Champions League spot was quashed when the team went on a five game losing streak at the start of the festive fixture list, but the Saints rallied and have taken full points from Everton, Crystal Palace, Arsenal, Manchester United and Newcastle in the past few weeks, as well as a hard-earned 1-1 draw against Chelsea at St Mary's; the only time Koeman's men have dropped points after taking the lead this season.

They may have not been the favourites by any stretch of the imagination, but Southampton are now firmly in contention to qualify for Europe despite the big names competing for the same spots. It is my opinion that not only would it be a great thing for the club to reach Champions League heights, but for football in general, to show that it is not always those with the biggest wallets that have the final say, and that despite not having many 'star players', the likes of Southampton can fight the big boys with ambition and team spirit in abundance.

## The World Game | EPL



## STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Chelsea	22	16	4	2	51	19	+32	52 WW
2 Manchester City	22	14	5	3	45	22	+23	47 LD1
3 Southampton	22	13	3	6	37	16	+21	42 WW
4 Manchester United	22	11	7	4	36	21	+15	40 WL
5 Arsenal	22	11	6	5	39	25	+14	39 WW
6 Tottenham Hotspur	22	11	4	7	32	30	+2	37 WL
7 West Ham United	22	10	6	6	35	25	+10	36 WD
8 Liverpool	22	10	5	7	31	27	+4	35 WW
9 Swansea City	22	8	6	8	26	30	-4	30 LD1
10 Stoke City	22	8	5	9	23	27	-4	29 WL
11 Newcastle United	22	7	6	9	26	35	-9	27 LLL
12 Everton	22	5	8	9	30	34	-4	23 DD
13 Crystal Palace	22	5	8	9	25	33	-8	23 WW
14 West Bromwich ...	22	5	7	10	20	29	-9	22 DW
15 Aston Villa	22	5	7	10	11	25	-14	22 LLL
16 Sunderland	22	3	11	8	19	33	-14	20 LLL
17 Burnley	22	4	8	10	21	36	-15	20 LW
18 Hull City	22	4	7	11	20	30	-10	19 LL
19 Queens Park Ra...	22	5	4	13	23	39	-16	19 LLL
20 Leicester City	22	4	5	13	20	34	-14	17 LW

## LATEST RESULTS

Aston Villa	0 - 2	Liverpool
Swansea City	0 - 5	Chelsea
Burnley	2 - 3	Crystal Palace
Tottenham	2 - 1	Sunderland
QPR	0 - 2	Man Utd
Leicester City	0 - 1	Stoke City
Newcastle Utd	1 - 2	Southampton
West Ham Utd	0 - 0	Hull City
Man City	0 - 2	Arsenal
Everton	0 - 0	WBA

## NEXT MATCH

Hull City	v	Newcastle Utd
Crystal Palace	v	Everton
Liverpool	v	West Ham Utd
Man United	v	Leicester City
Stoke City	v	QPR
Sunderland	v	Burnley
WBA	v	Tottenham
Chelsea	v	Man City
Arsenal	v	Aston Villa
Southampton	v	Swansea City

## One to watch!

While the top of the table clash will draw most of the media attention this weekend, Sunday's match between Southampton and Swansea should also provide a show for the neutrals. Both sides play an exciting brand of attacking football and have exceeded general expectations in the league for the last couple of seasons. Are hot on the heels of Liverpool in mid-table, but Southampton are sitting way up in third and are looking to continue their push for Champions League qualification.

## EPL action returns after FA Cup break

## Nick Amies

After a weekend's break in the league due to the FA Cup fourth round we return to action with a genuine blockbuster as Chelsea host Manchester City at the Etihad.

Jose Mourinho's side are currently sitting five points clear at the top and boast a 100% record at home so far this season, while Manchester City suffered a disappointing loss to Arsenal in their last Premier League outing. Victory here for the home side would allow them to put one hand on the title, but Manuel Pellegrini's side won't give up their crown without a fight.

In what will also be a hotly contested fixture surprise packets West Ham will take on Liverpool, with Stewart Downing and Andy Carroll looking to heap further misery upon their former club. The Reds are showing signs of improvement but still sit in eighth just a season after mounting a credible title challenge. A win here would continue

their revival and put the top four in Brendan Rogers' sights.

Currently clinging on to fourth is Manchester United, who welcome rock-bottom Leicester City to Old Trafford. Aussie veteran Mark Schwarzer could start in goal for the Foxes, who will be looking for an upset and a way of out the bottom three, while United must secure maximum points with Arsenal just one point off the pace.

On Sunday Arsenal will look to continue their mid-season resurgence against Aston Villa after their impressive win over Manchester City a fortnight ago. The Villans are struggling to score goals but their defence has proved a tough task, letting in the same amount of goals as the Gunners this season.

Remaining matches: Hull vs Newcastle (Prediction: 0-1), Crystal Palace vs Everton (Prediction: 1-1), Stoke vs QPR (Prediction: 3-0), Sunderland vs Burnley (Prediction: 0-0) and West Brom vs Tottenham (Prediction: 0-2).



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## The World Game | La Liga



Cristiano Ronaldo sees red after being sent-off in the 2-1 away win at Cordoba.

## Atletico Dump Real Out Of Copa Del

Pepe Lopez

Just as Atletico took a nostalgic leap into history with the popular return of club junior and Spanish international striker Fernando Torres (whose brace of goals at the Santiago Bernabeu enabled Atleti to eliminate their local rivals from the Spanish Copa Del Rey) Atleti announced a major leap into the future with 20% of new club shares issued and purchased by a Chinese business man.

Wang Jianlin from Beijing will become a club director and the third largest share holder of the club after Gil Marin and Enrique Cerezo. The announcement for a club with a deep troubled financial past, has the potential to cement the Spanish La Liga competition as one of depth, and no longer the Real v Barca 2 horse race it had become in most recent years. It appears that no longer will Atleti have to sell their best players to keep the debt collectors and taxmen at bay. Atletico have arguably lost the best list of strikers in Europe just to stay

above water in the past decade. This list includes none other than Fernando Torres, Sergio Aguero, Radamel Falcao and Diego Costa.

Speaking with Argentine radio, Diego Simeone made these passionate comments about his club;

"I see that Atletico have got out of the habit of continuously improving as a club. I want to get them back on track in terms of improving. If we keep improving, I'll never leave Atletico".

Simeone was also quick to praise Fernando Torres;

"You don't just forget how to play football when you hit 30. I knew that. We told him that he didn't have to rescue Atletico like he did as a young lad, but instead join us and develop with the team".

Despite opening up the Copa Del Rey with the elimination of Real Madrid, Atletico Madrid will now play against Barcelona in the quarter-finals;

Simeone had this to say on La Liga top pair;

### STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	M
1 Real Madrid	19	16	0	3	64	16	+48	48	W
2 Barcelona	20	15	2	3	54	9	+45	47	W
3 Atletico Madrid	20	14	2	4	40	19	+21	44	W
4 Valencia	20	12	5	3	38	18	+20	41	W
5 Sevilla	19	12	3	4	31	20	+11	39	LW
6 Villarreal	20	11	5	4	33	17	+16	38	W
7 Málaga	20	9	5	6	23	21	+2	32	DL
8 Eibar	20	7	6	7	24	26	-2	27	L
9 Espanyol	20	7	5	8	25	29	-4	26	W
10 Rayo Vallecano	20	7	2	11	21	36	-15	23	LW
11 Real Sociedad	20	5	7	8	20	24	-4	22	WL
12 Celta de Vigo	20	5	6	9	19	23	-4	21	LW
13 Athletic Club	20	5	5	10	16	26	-10	20	DL
14 Getafe	20	5	5	10	16	28	-12	20	W
15 Córdoba	20	3	9	8	16	30	-14	18	LD
16 Deportivo La C...	20	4	6	10	16	33	-17	18	DL
17 Elche	20	4	5	11	18	41	-23	17	LW
18 Almería	20	4	4	12	17	33	-16	16	LL
19 Levante	20	3	7	10	13	35	-22	16	LL
20 Granada	20	2	9	9	13	33	-20	15	DL

### LATEST RESULTS

Córdoba	1 - 2	Real Madrid
Elche	0 - 6	Barcelona
Atlético Madrid	3 - 1	Rayo Vallecano
Real Sociedad	1 - 0	Eibar
Villarreal	1 - 0	Levante
Deportivo La C...	2 - 2	Granada
Athletic Club	1 - 1	Málaga
Espanyol	3 - 0	Almería
Valencia	3 - 1	Sevilla
Getafe	2 - 1	Celta de Vigo

### NEXT MATCH

Rayo Vallecano	v	Deportivo La C...
Real Madrid	v	Real Sociedad
Eibar	v	Atlético Madrid
Granada	v	Elche
Celta de Vigo	v	Córdoba
Levante	v	Athletic Club
Almería	v	Getafe
Sevilla	v	Espanyol
Barcelona	v	Villarreal
Málaga	v	Valencia

"Barcelona like to play in tighter spaces, whilst Real Madrid play better in space and on the counter-attack. When you play against Real Madrid and you're watching from the sidelines, the games seem never-ending. They just go on forever. It's really tough to compete with Barcelona and Madrid, but we use our game to make things difficult for them. I couldn't understand how we were so far adrift of them. We're still a thorn in their sides".

## The World Game | Serie A



Parma boss Roberto Donadoni looks on as his side go down to Cesena .

## Can Parma escape their crisis?

Luca Cetta

**W**hat a difference a season makes. This time last term Parma were in the midst of their best ever streak and considered serious European challengers. Following a dramatic final day they pipped Torino to the last Europa League spot, but that's where the joy ended.

It transpired that Parma were rejected a UEFA license due to an overdue tax debt and therefore barred from European competition. They took the case to three courts arguing they eventually did make the payment, only for the appeal to be rejected each time. Owner Tommaso Ghirardi said this may be the incident to make him leave football.

It set the tone for the new season. In direct contrast to 2013-14, Parma are struggling at the foot of the table. Beset with financial burdens, Ghirardi made good on his promise and sold the club to a Russian-Cypriot company, but not before they were docked one point for failing to pay the players.

The deduction was a heavy blow when you consider that after 20 rounds the Gialloblu have just nine points, ten from safety. They were defeated by Cesena last weekend for the second time this season – Cesena's only wins

– and Coach Roberto Donadoni is said to be close to the sack.

Star striker Antonio Cassano sued over these non-payments and then on Monday walked away from his contract by mutual consent. He is owed €4m in unpaid wages. Captain Alessandro Lucarelli says more could follow.

A lot of work, then, for the new owners. Albanian Emir Kodra has been appointed club president, the youngest in Serie A at just 29. One of his first points of on-field business is deciding the future of Donadoni. His position has sat on a knife-edge for some time and in line to replace him is former forward Hernan Crespo, currently coaching the Primavera team. Kodra admits it will be a struggle, but he is hoping the arrival of a centre forward before the transfer window closes can help ease relegation fears.

This weekend Parma face another team in crisis, Milan. The Rossoneri have not won any of their first four games of 2015 and without a change are in serious danger of failing to qualify for Europe for a second successive season. Filippo Inzaghi's future is uncertain. Parma will be hoping they can put off-field issues aside and get their season on track against the stuttering giants.

## STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Juventus	20	15	4	1	44	9	+35	49 WW
2 Roma	20	12	6	2	33	15	+18	42 DD
3 Napoli	20	10	6	4	36	25	+11	36 WW
4 Lazio	20	10	4	6	36	23	+13	34 WL
5 Sampdoria	20	8	10	2	26	18	+8	34 DW
6 Fiorentina	20	8	7	5	28	19	+9	31 DW
7 Genoa	20	7	7	6	28	25	+3	28 LD
8 Palermo	20	6	9	5	32	32	+0	27 DD
9 Udinese	20	7	6	7	25	27	-2	27 DW
10 Internazionale	20	6	8	6	29	26	+3	26 LD
11 Milan	20	6	8	6	28	25	+3	26 LL
12 Sassuolo	20	5	10	5	24	28	-4	25 LD
13 Torino	20	6	7	7	17	21	-4	25 WW
14 Hellas Verona	20	6	6	8	22	32	-10	24 WL
15 Atalanta	20	4	8	8	15	25	-10	20 LW
16 Empoli	20	3	10	7	18	25	-7	19 LD
17 Cagliari	20	4	7	9	27	38	-11	19 WD
18 Chievo	20	4	6	10	14	24	-10	18 LL
19 Cesena	20	2	6	12	19	40	-21	12 WL
20 Parma	20	3	1	16	19	43	-24	9 LL

## LATEST RESULTS

Cagliari	2 - 1	Sassuolo
Lazio	3 - 1	Milan
Hellas Verona	1 - 0	Atalanta
Parma	1 - 2	Cesena
Juventus	2 - 0	Chievo
Sampdoria	1 - 1	Palermo
Internazionale	0 - 1	Torino
Fiorentina	1 - 1	Roma
Empoli	1 - 2	Udinese
Napoli	2 - 1	Genoa

## NEXT MATCH

Atalanta	v	Cagliari
Genoa	v	Fiorentina
Roma	v	Empoli
Sassuolo	v	Internazionale
Palermo	v	Hellas Verona
Udinese	v	Juventus
Cesena	v	Lazio
Chievo	v	Napoli
Torino	v	Sampdoria
Milan	v	Parma

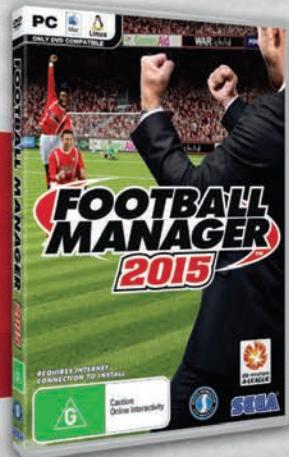
## One to watch!

Samuel Eto'o will be in line to make his debut this weekend as Sampdoria host Torino. The Cameroonian is Samp's big name purchase of January and has been signed to help the club – currently in the European places – reach the continent next season.

# HOW WILL YOU MANAGE?

SPLASH THE CASH OR TRUST THE KIDS?  
FRIEND OF THE BOARD OR FIGHT FOR MORE?  
GO FOR BROKE OR PARK THE BUS?  
KEEP YOUR COOL OR SHOW YOUR PASSION?

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